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ABSTRACT

A study obtained early information on the effects of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 on states' efforts to develop and implement effective systems of school-to-work transition. Systems in eight states were studied: California, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. State leaders understood the need to develop a clear vision of the role school-to-work transition can play in educational and economic development and the importance of promoting acceptance and understanding of the vision. The states differed in the characteristics and specificity of their vision and the extent to which it rested on a broad base of public acceptance and support. The most promising communications strategies were built on assessment of both statewide and sector-specific information needs and entailed careful planning and the hiring of specialized expertise. States focused their efforts on creation of strategies for implementation, rather than on system implementation itself. Most were moving slowing and waiting to see what leadership the federal government would provide in establishing skill standards. States whose systems emphasized work force development tended to target noncollege bound students; states whose systems were intended to promote broad education-reform objectives were likely to target all students. Results suggested the need for technical assistance at the federal level to help with development of skill standards, integration of plans for school-to-work transition programs with related plans and programs, and outreach to employers. (YLB)

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BUILDING

School-to-Work

TRANSITION

SYSTEMS

in Eight States

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COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS (CCSSO)

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FOREWORD

In spring 1993, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the U.S. Department of Labor conducted an evaluation of youth apprenticeship systems in eight states that resulted in the report, *Using Youth Apprenticeship to Improve the Transition to Work* (Reisner et al., 1994). At the time this report was being published, the 103rd Congress passed the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994. The Act encourages states, with the use of "seed money," to broaden their approach to developing comprehensive, state-level, school-to-work systems. Youth apprenticeship is viewed as one of several important strategies in a coherent system for youth development and career preparation.

As a result of this shift to a broader focus, the U.S. Department of Labor provided additional funding to conduct research on the impact of the School-to-Work Act on large-scale systemic reform in the states. The Council, along with its subcontractor Policy Studies Associates, was asked to build on its research of state system-building for youth apprenticeship in the eight states: California, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

This study provides a "snapshot" of the progress of eight states in a fast-moving policy domain. It was developed from documents and field interviews conducted in the fall of 1994. In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor, we offer this report as a resource for states to use as they address system-building issues and challenges such as articulating a vision; facilitating participation of key institutional partners, private and public; linking the school-to-work system to educational reform, work-force training, and economic development strategies; establishing skill standards; and involving all students in high-quality school-to-career opportunities. It presents practical field experience that improve states' capacity to implement systems that prepare all students for productive careers and lifelong learning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review of the development and early implementation of state-led, school-to-work transition systems indicates that each state in this eight-state sample is making progress toward the creation of a system that reflects the principles and strategies embodied in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) of 1994. These principles and strategies focus on the creation of integrated, state-led systems that can promote: (1) reforms in school-based education emphasizing high expectations for student achievement and instruction tied to promising careers; (2) workplace experiences emphasizing student exposure to careers and career skills; and (3) connecting activities that link students' learning experiences in school and the workplace, in order to prepare students for advanced education/training and high-skill, high-wage careers. While generally consistent with STWOA and, in most cases, stimulated by the recent act, the new systems in the eight states reflect state priorities and traditions as well as federal programmatic components. To support continued state-led system building, federal leadership is needed to support both technical assistance to the states and further development of national policy aimed at improving the transition of America's young people from formal schooling to high-skill, high-wage careers.

Undertaken at the request of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) as part of a grant to the Council of Chief State School Officers, this study was intended to provide early information on the effects of STWOA on states' efforts to develop and implement effective systems of school-to-work transition. By looking at a small set of states shortly after their receipt of STWOA grants, the study's sponsors believed that it would be possible to learn important lessons that could inform the administration of the new federal law and the provision of technical assistance. In particular, the sponsors expected the study to provide information on varied approaches to state system-building.

The states chosen for review were the same eight states that had received grants in 1992 from either DOL or the Council (or both) for the purpose of developing statewide youth-apprenticeship systems. The states are California, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Because of their experience with state system-building for youth apprenticeship, these states are well ahead of most others in understanding and implementing the principles and strategies set forth in STWOA. In early 1994, all eight states received STWOA Development Grants; in addition, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, and Wisconsin received Implementation Grants in July 1994.

Leadership and Vision Shaping the State Systems

To varying degrees, leaders in all eight states understand the need to develop a clear vision of the role school-to-work transition can play in the educational and economic development of the state. They also understand the importance of promoting statewide acceptance and understanding of the vision. The states differ, however, in the characteristics and specificity of their vision and the extent to which it rests on a broad base of public acceptance and support.

The most significant feature of the vision in each state is whether it focuses mainly on students' educational development and thus on the reform of the overall educational system or whether it is primarily concerned with improving the capacities of the state's work force and thus the economic opportunities and success of the state's citizenry. States that emphasize educational development have tended to link their school-to-work system-building to broader reforms that entail raising expectations for the educational performance of all students, increasing opportunities for applied learning, and expanding integration across the curriculum. By contrast, states emphasizing work-force development have tended to focus on meeting the needs of employers and linking school-to-work transition to programs for enhancing the transition from welfare to work and from low-skill, low-wage jobs to better jobs.

Another central feature of each state's vision concerns the process through which it has been developed and its specificity. Some states have adopted a clearly defined idea of where they want to go and how they want to get there with respect to their school-to-work transition system. Other

states have only a generalized notion of how they want their school-to-work system to operate, intending to allow substantial leeway to regions and localities in tailoring approaches that fit local circumstances. Not surprisingly, the strategies that states have adopted tend to fit their prevailing norms for the relationship between state government and local or regional entities.

A third important feature of the states' visions is whether the emerging state system is primarily a reshaping of pre-existing programs or is a completely new entity. States following the first path have redesigned current programs (including especially those that are training-related) to create a more cohesive, systemic whole; this option has the advantage of avoiding the development of a new administrative apparatus, but it has the disadvantage of sometimes creating conflicts over bureaucratic turf. When the school-to-work transition system is envisioned as a completely new entity, existing programs may find a niche, but it is up to them to make the changes needed to align themselves with the state's broad goals.

Involving the Public and Stakeholders in the System

For a large-scale systems change to take hold, it is essential for all the sectors that might be affected by the change to understand and endorse or at least accept it. One important way to help ensure this support is to create avenues for leaders of the affected groups to help shape the new system. In addition, educational activities, including workshops, public forums, and publications, can support the change by explaining it with enough examples and detail so that those affected by the change can understand how it will touch them personally.

The most promising communications strategies among those adopted by the eight states are built on assessment of both statewide and sector-specific information needs, and entail careful planning and sometimes the hiring of specialized expertise. Depending on state-level communications objectives, the strategies used or planned for use in the eight states include the following:

- The production of brochures, newsletters, and videotapes
- Advertising through public-service announcements and magazine inserts
- Media coverage of important events or success stories
- Public meetings
- Speeches and other forms of promotion by governors and other state leaders

Key groups targeted for communication outreach are employers, organized labor, educators, parents, and students, with each group handled differently depending on its concerns and potential responsibilities in relation to school-to-work transition.

Advisory groups (known under many different designations) are the primary vehicle that the eight states have used to connect with critical stakeholders (especially employers), in order to gain their support and involvement in the development of the school-to-work system and promote collaboration across stakeholder groups (e.g., educators and employers). A problem that states have experienced, however, is that stakeholder representatives involved in state-sponsored activities do not necessarily have avenues for passing their understanding of the evolving school-to-work system on to their constituents or peers. As a result, state-level stakeholder support does not necessarily ensure later understanding or support for local system implementation.

Strategies That States Are Using to Implement Planned Systems

In general, the eight states have focused their efforts so far on the creation of strategies for implementation, rather than on system implementation itself. This focus is consistent with the broad scope of the planned system change. As of September 1994, when the data collection for this study was completed, the eight states had statewide planning structures in place, and in some instances had completed all of their system development work and had began system operations.

Each of the eight states has established an interagency body that oversees school-to-work transition. In most states, one state agency has been designated to lead the development of the school-

to-work transition system, although the agency responsible for system development is not always the agency chosen to implement the new system once it is developed. Factors in the selection of lead agencies include the priorities and political considerations of the governor, the other education and work-force initiatives under way in the state, and the state-level stature and role of vocational education.

States are calling on their policy-setting bodies to formalize their commitments to school-to-work transition systems. In particular, state legislatures in collaboration with state executive branches have enacted a variety of laws that either (1) explicitly authorize school-to-work transition programs, (2) mandate education-reform efforts to which school-to-work programming is linked, or (3) consolidate state-sponsored work-force training activities. Additionally, state boards of education in some instances also play a role in setting policies that support broad objectives established through legislation.

A central operational relationship in school-to-work transition systems is the programmatic link between the lead state agency and the local school-to-work partnerships. Two primary ways that state systems are interacting (or planning to interact) with local partnerships is through the award of grants and the provision of technical assistance. State grantmaking strategies reflect broader state orientations toward system implementation, ranging from highly prescriptive to permissive arrangements with locals. Plans and practices for providing technical assistance are equally diverse, and include arrangements for drawing on the experiences of developed local sites through their service as technical-assistance providers, their role as models for others, and their development of training materials for statewide dissemination.

Few of the eight states have yet devoted significant effort to promoting expansion and institutionalization of their school-to-work transition systems. The most promising approaches, however, build the principles of school-to-work system reform into state requirements for long-range strategic planning. In addition, states without school-to-work legislation are interested in enacting appropriate laws as a way of institutionalizing the initiative.

State Efforts to Establish Skill Standards

Like many other reforms initiated at national and state levels in recent years, school-to-work transition systems are intended to be driven by voluntary standards that are benchmarked to high attainment levels and that facilitate the portability of skill credentials. This study indicated the difficulty of achieving this goal, due to the differing conceptions across states of what a skill standard should be, the different clusters of skills that states have adopted (or are considering), and the high costs of developmental work that are required to construct, test, and refine standards and also assessment and certification instruments. As a result, most states are moving slowly and are waiting to see what leadership the federal government will provide.

States that are developing skill standards have adopted some common patterns, however. For example, most are breaking down skill attainment levels to denote varying levels of skill proficiency, thus permitting interim measures and feedback for youth as they work toward skill mastery. In addition, all of the states that have implemented standards-driven instruction are addressing problems in ensuring the acceptance of these high-school courses and certificates by both two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions. Although all of the states are involving employers in their planning and developmental work on standards, some of the states are finding that employers do not share uniform expectations for what the standards will emphasize or how they will be used as hiring criteria.

Student Access to Transition Opportunities

Although interviews and documents in all eight states indicated an intent that the emerging school-to-work transition system would serve all students in the state, actual plans (as well as initial implementation efforts) reflect diverse assumptions and practices across the states. In general, states whose school-to-work systems emphasize work-force development tend to target students who are not planning to enroll in a four-year college or univer-

sity. By contrast, states whose systems are mainly intended to promote broad education-reform objectives are more likely to perceive school-to-work transition experiences as benefiting all students, including those bound for four-year colleges.

To open opportunities to a wide spectrum of students, states are employing a number of strategies. The main one is adding special provisions to their requests for local grant proposals, requiring applicants to show the steps they are taking to extend opportunities to disadvantaged students. In addition, some states are taking steps (or planning to take steps) to upgrade their career-information systems and to make career information available to students at younger ages. This strategy is intended, in part, to help compensate for weak career-information networks available to disadvantaged students through their families and communities. Similarly, state-sponsored career-counseling centers are being established to help compensate for the absence of informal counseling opportunities in the lives of some students living in isolated inner-city and rural areas. Targeted program opportunities for these groups are also planned in order to increase these students' participation in school-to-work transition opportunities.

The main strategy that states are using to attract college-bound students to school-to-work opportunities is promoting postsecondary institutions' acceptance of course credits earned in applied academics and hands-on settings. For two-year institutions, the main issue has been whether they would accept high school credits earned in applied courses and allow students to use them to earn advanced placement in postsecondary degree or credential programs. For four-year institutions, the main issue has been whether such courses would be accepted as meeting admissions requirements, especially in science and math.

Using State Experiences to Inform Federal Action

An immediate value of these states' experiences is simply that they provide information on the types of issues and problems that states are confronting as they move from system planning to implementation. Because this set of eight states is further along in implementing STWOA based on their prior experience with youth apprenticeship, they can indicate to federal administrators what to anticipate as other states move toward system implementation.

A second value is that the experiences of these eight states can point to technical assistance needs that other states are likely to experience. Our interviews indicated that state system developers need certain types of help that are most appropriately provided directly from the federal level and other help that can be most efficiently provided by their peers in other states (although facilitated from the federal level). In the former area are needs such as the following:

- Help with development of skill standards, especially
  - help identifying career clusters around which standards might be developed
  - assistance in integrating state-developed skill standards with standards being developed by national groups
  - help in coordinating and integrating standards for academic performance with skill standards
  - opportunities to obtain information copies of draft standards developed by national groups and other states
- Help in integrating plans for school-to-work transition systems with related plans and programs, especially the state plans required under Goals 2000: Educate America Act
- Help in outreach to employers and other stakeholders

State system developers also said that they could benefit from opportunities to learn about system development in other states. In particular, they said that they could learn from the problems other states had encountered and the solutions they had forged to address those problems. They also said they wanted to know about successful strategies adopted by other states. One respondent said that his state would like to bring in experts from other states to provide consultation at both state and local levels.

A final way that the experiences of the eight states can assist federal administrators and policymakers is by pointing up the need for further development and communication of federal policy. Based on the research reported here, we found that provisions in various federal authorities undercut the strong emphasis in STWOA on integrating school-to-work transition activities into a comprehensive statewide system. While these provisions do not directly contradict STWOA in most instances, by their existence they perpetuate the notion of segmented, categorical responses to young people's needs to make successful transitions to high-skill, high-wage careers. The federal government could strengthen the state and local implementation of STWOA by articulating what a comprehensive school-to-work transition system might look like, taking steps to streamline and increase integration across the various federal authorities that bear on school-to-work transition, and forcefully communicating this core policy to all parties involved, including employers, educators, organized labor, political leaders, parents, and students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many talented, committed people across the United States are working hard to develop and implement school-to-work transition systems in their states and communities. We met with and interviewed many people working in this study's eight sample states—California, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. We sincerely appreciate their time and candor in sharing their experiences and aspirations with us.

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As important as these contributions were, the authors are solely responsible for the conclusions in this report and for any errors it contains.

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INTRODUCTION

The past decade has seen rapid change in public policy supporting the education and training of American youth for work and careers. Driven by twin imperatives to improve the nation's work force and to upgrade American students' educational achievement, educators, employers, government officials, the employment-training community, organized labor, and the public have sought out and explored new strategies for improving the transition of young people from formal schooling to high-skill, high-wage careers. The reports of a series of commissions and study groups have documented the problems in achieving successful school-to-work transition and pointed to various promising strategies for attacking these problems. In 1994, the efforts and objectives of these diverse parties culminated in the enactment of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA), landmark legislation that sets forth a policy statement and action steps for the development and implementation of state systems that will support and facilitate the successful school-to-work transition of American youth.

This report describes and analyzes the plans and implementation efforts of eight states in the months following enactment of STWOA, as the states took steps to develop and, in some cases, implement school-to-work transition systems. These states—California, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin—were selected as the subjects of this research because they had previously been studied in an evaluation of youth-apprenticeship grants awarded in 1992 by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (Reisner et al., 1994). Because of their experience with state system building for youth apprenticeship, these states are well ahead of most others in understanding and implementing the principles and strategies set forth in STWOA. In early 1994, these states received federal Development Grants to support the design of state-sponsored, school-to-work transition systems, which, in response to STWOA, were intended to involve a broader set of purposes and strategies than was possible through the prior focus on youth apprenticeship. In July 1994, four of the states (Maine, Michigan, Oregon, and Wisconsin) received STWOA Implementation Grants to support the installation of federally approved plans for their state systems.

Context for the Development of State Systems

The research summarized in this report has focused in particular on two cornerstones of federal policy, as embodied in STWOA. These two principles are (1) that national efforts to improve school-to-work transition should rely on comprehensive, integrated systems for delivering a wide range of related opportunities and services and (2) that states should have primary responsibility for the development and operation of these systems. The following discussion reviews these two principles and also summarizes the eight states' experience with youth apprenticeship.

Why It Matters Whether School-to-Work Transition Efforts Are Systemic

From the beginning of the public debate leading to enactment of STWOA, a central assumption has been that long-term effectiveness will depend in part on whether the policy and governance approaches to school-to-work transition are systemic in nature. *What it means to be systemic in this context is that the many strands of academic and vocational education, employment training and counseling, standard setting and certification, and linkage with employers are integrated in a series of opportunities and resources that are readily available within all communities and to all students.* Although individually these opportunities may link to many different sources of local support and to varied structures for service delivery and may draw on varied professional disciplines, they present themselves to the young person as a coherent continuum of possible experiences, each of which is related to the rest.

Such a system permits the young person—the system user—to select a path that makes sense in relation to his or her interests, talents, and long-term goals. With the support of parents or other advisors, the youth can make decisions based on comprehensive knowledge of the various opportunities that will arise as he or she moves through school and on into the workplace and adulthood.

Similarly, from the perspective of an educator, trainer, or employer, the existence of a comprehensive system makes it possible to see how a single system component contributes to the overall effort and how it relates to other components and to the individual who is the ultimate beneficiary.

In the complex arena of school-to-work transition, however, creating and operating a comprehensive system is an extraordinarily ambitious enterprise. A school-to-work transition system necessarily involves people and organizations with distinctly different cultures, long-term goals, and methods for measuring success. Moreover, due to budget constraints at all levels of government, the system must be made to operate at virtually no added cost beyond the costs for the system components individually.

States as Organizing Jurisdictions for School-to-Work Transition

Although states are not the only jurisdictions around which school-to-work transition systems could have been organized, they are appropriate in several respects, as consideration of other options indicates. For example, the system could have been envisioned as a national entity. Although this would have permitted maximum uniformity of opportunity across communities, it would have been inconsistent with the decentralized character of American education and would have ignored the local and regional needs of employers. At the other extreme, a strictly localized base for system development (e.g., with municipalities, school districts, or Job Training Partnership Act [JTPA] Service Delivery Areas in the central role) would have ensured maximum responsiveness of school-to-work preparation to local conditions, but would have made it difficult to (1) assemble enough human and financial resources to develop the supports (e.g., standards, certification procedures, technical assistance) needed across any given system and (2) achieve a level of uniformity (and thus portability of credentials) across any broader region.

Unlike a system structured around either the nation as a whole or many systems based on local jurisdictions, states have significant advantages as the basis for school-to-work transition systems. For example, states are the primary governing vehicle for the administration of both elementary/secondary and postsecondary education, especially for setting minimum requirements for instruction and student achievement, certifying instructors, and raising and distributing tax funds. Indeed, for many reasons, states have played the central role in the education-reform efforts of the past decade. Increasingly, states also play a role in encouraging business investment and expansion, especially through the provision of tailored, high-skill training to current or potential workers (as in Pennsylvania, for example). In fact, state government's multifaceted roles in all phases of educa- tion and human resource development, social services, and economic development make it well suited to serve as the focal point for system-building in support of school-to-work transition.

At the same time, by pinning systems development to state government, the new systems—whether developed around school-to-work transition or any other pressing need—are likely to be no more effective than each state's governance capacities and traditions permit the system to be. For example, as later chapters of the report discuss, states whose administrative styles or legislative mandates are based on high levels of local autonomy are unlikely to become assertive leaders when they take on a new responsibility such as school-to-work transition. Similarly, a state government structure that fosters independence among department heads (e.g., through elections for key state posts or appointments to key positions by elected boards) is likely to experience problems in achieving meaningful interagency collaboration. These state-specific factors were evident in the earlier study of youth apprenticeship (Reisner et al., 1994) and are no less apparent now.

The States' Experiences with Youth Apprenticeship

As noted, the eight states whose experiences are analyzed in this report share a common background in having received demonstration grants from either DOL or the Council of Chief State School Officers (or both) to develop statewide systems of youth apprenticeship. Because the selection process for both grant programs emphasized states' commitment to development of

youth-apprenticeship systems, we know that several of these states had noteworthy system-development efforts under way before the 1992 grant awards. Moreover, we know from evaluation of the states' activities under these grants that each of the eight states used the grants to carry out further development and implementation activities focused on youth apprenticeship (Reisner et al., 1994).

Our evaluation of these activities indicated that youth apprenticeship programs were capable of providing high-quality learning experiences to participating youth. Projected numbers of young people that these programs could serve in the near future were small, however, because of the difficulties of securing paid work experience opportunities and of adapting curriculums to integrate academic and vocational instruction. A further problem was the resentment that the term *apprenticeship* caused within organized labor, due to the different and, in some ways, more advanced nature of the registered-apprenticeship experience.

Although STWOA emphasizes paid work experience and the integration of academic and vocational instruction, it does so within a much broader framework, containing more student-level options than was possible with a narrow focus on youth apprenticeship. States' adoption of the STWOA framework means that more young people can benefit from positive school-to-work transition experiences sooner than would have been possible by focusing on youth apprenticeship alone.

The research presented in this report indicates that several states that had made the most progress in developing youth-apprenticeship systems (e.g., Maine, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin) have continued to emphasize youth apprenticeship within their school-to-work system framework. Further developmental efforts in these states may involve spinning off the lessons of youth apprenticeship to a wider range of student opportunities or may simply result in continued expansion of youth apprenticeship. Because the support exists in these states for broadening the range of school-to-work opportunities that are available, we would not be surprised to see that type of continuing development within the STWOA framework.

Study Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this study was to *provide early information on the effects of STWOA on states' efforts to develop and implement effective systems of school-to-work transition*. By looking at a small set of states shortly after their receipt of federal school-to-work grants, we may learn important lessons that can inform policy development and the ongoing administration of the new federal law. The experience of these eight states with youth apprenticeship and system building may prove to be an advantage with STWOA activities, in comparison to many other states without such experience. Also, by selecting a set of states whose school-to-work transition efforts had already been examined (in the context of their administration of youth-apprenticeship demonstration grants), we hoped to bring a historical perspective to bear on their current efforts. Although we believe the primary audience for this study will be federal administrators, we also expect the study to be useful to state administrators and others involved in planning or refining structures and strategies for school-to-work transition systems.

The primary research methods used in the study were the development of state-specific case studies and cross-case analyses. To prepare the case studies, the research team reviewed a variety of background materials, including:

- The case studies prepared for the earlier study of state system-building in support of youth apprenticeship
- The program narratives and supporting information contained in the states' Development and Implementation Grants
- The progress reports submitted to the federal government under the Development Grants

We organized the information contained in these sources around a series of topics that were identified at the beginning of the study as being of special interest in this research. These topics included:

- State-level governance and interagency collaboration
- State-sponsored development and application of skill standards

- States' efforts to communicate their vision of school-to-work transition and to foster linkages with employers, educators, labor organizations, and parents
- State efforts to direct school-to-work transition opportunities to all students
- Development of state school-to-work transition plans

We also conducted a three- to five-day visit to each state to carry out in-depth interviews on these topics. Each site visit involved two members of the research team, and each visit was planned in advance through consultation with the state contact identified in the state's Development Grant. In each state, we interviewed key participants in the development and implementation of the school-to-work transition system. In addition, as appropriate in each state, we interviewed other key individuals, including state legislators, local project directors, administrators of postsecondary institutions, representatives of organized labor, researchers, and employers. The visits occurred in July, August, and September 1994.

Using information compiled from all of these data collection activities, members of the research team prepared a case study for each state, organized around the five topics noted previously. The case studies then served as the basis for cross-case data analysis that addressed the study purposes and study topics. Results of this work are presented in the chapters that follow.

Throughout the report, individual states are cited as examples of particular conditions or trends. Unless otherwise noted, these references should not be understood to imply that these are the only states among the eight that fit the particular description.

The information presented here is accurate as of the time of our site visits. In a few instances, we have indicated program changes occurring since then. Because this type of updating was not undertaken systemically, we emphasize that information is current as of late summer 1994 unless otherwise noted.

CHAPTER ONE
Leadership and Vision Shaping the State Systems

The eight states in our sample are designing and implementing their school-to-work transition systems with larger state agendas in mind and within state-specific traditions of leadership and governance, all of which affect the systems they are developing. Despite the diversity in pre-existing agendas and traditions, however, they face certain common conditions that are shaping their ideas about state-sponsored, school-to-work transition. This chapter discusses the eight states' intentions about what their systems will look like when fully implemented. It also reviews how their visions vary because of state contexts and leadership.

The States' Visions for School-to-Work Transition Systems

The eight states are thinking of their school-to-work system-development efforts within a broader framework of state concerns and goals. For example, at the most global level, California's goal is to align a vast array of systems, programs, and services, as follows:

> The state's education institutions, job training programs, and employment services will form a coherent, fully articulated, and adaptable education, employment, and training system in which the public and private sectors cooperate to assure the State's future economic and social well-being (State of California, 1993, p. 4).

Other states have similarly broad visions that encompass development of a school-to-work system, but reach far beyond a youth-development agenda to include training and retraining of adults, reform of the welfare system, and so on. For example, *Maine's Challenge*, which describes that state's vision for its school-to-work transition system, presents a plan to create a high-productivity, high-quality, high-wage economy for the state, using many levers to achieve that goal, including development of a school-to-work system. Oregon's plans for school-to-work transition are part of its "long-term investment in its people which is designed to foster a vibrant economy and to achieve a vision of having the best educated and trained citizens in America by the year 2000, and a workforce equal to any in the world by the year 2010" (State of Oregon, 1993, p. 1).

Within these broad visions for enhancing the state's general economic conditions, the eight states have developed more specific plans that guide their school-to-work development efforts. At this level, many differences emerge among the states in terms of the core purposes or goals driving the vision for improving the school-to-work transitions of young people.

By requiring that the states' school-to-work transition systems include both school-based and work-based components, STWOA sought to ensure that the emerging initiatives would be an integral part of both educational improvement *and* workforce development. Though all eight states acknowledge that the rationale for building their school-to-work transition systems includes both goals, most states in the study have tended to emphasize one goal over the other in designing, implementing, and marketing their school-to-work systems. To analyze the goals of the eight state systems, we have used a variety of information sources—state documents, interviews, and, where appropriate, early school-to-work implementation activities. These observations concern variations in emphasis only; we do not imply that any of the eight states are ignoring required components of STWOA.

Some states reason that if students receive a sound education delivered through a high-quality educational system, then improvements in work-force quality will follow. The clearest example of this thinking is in West Virginia. Although state officials in West Virginia refer to the state's economic problems as a factor stimulating current school-to-work plans, the Governor's Workforce Development Council, which serves as the steering committee for the state's emerging school-to-work transition system, envisions that "all West Virginians will possess a core of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes that enables them to make smooth transitions among the changing career opportunities and job requirements brought about by changing technologies and international competitiveness."

The state's school-to-work system will focus on the development (in collaboration with the West Virginia Business and Education Alliance) and adoption of student skill standards and the elimination of the general track in high school. West Virginia system developers expect that eliminating the general track can be achieved only when students increase their orientation to long-term goals and teachers raise their expectation for student performance and increase their instructional skills.

Maine, Wisconsin, and California also emphasize education reform in their system visions. Although Maine has so far focused on implementation of a youth-apprenticeship program that has a work-force-development emphasis, the overall vision for its school-to-work system stresses the availability of several career pathways; this conception of how school-to-work transition can benefit the individual learner is likely to be featured in upcoming recommendations for education reform from a State Board of Education-appointed task force on learning results. Wisconsin's Education for Employment standards require all students in grades K–12 to have access to educational programs that provide applied instruction in academic and vocational curriculums, career exploration, and employability skills, as well as work experience. The shape and emphasis of California's vision are currently under development through a broad-based, inclusive structure and process; the most recent document outlining directions for system development proposes a close relationship between the state's education-reform and school-to-work agendas. The Education Commission of the States is currently preparing recommendations for a new wave of education reforms in California, and observers look forward to learning whether work-based learning will be included in this new portfolio.

Three states in our sample have shifted their school-to-work vision toward a growing emphasis on education reform, although development of an effective statewide work force continues to be an important goal in all three places. Iowa, for example, describes the education and training purposes of its system as being closely intertwined; and a recent change in its vision statement has increased the state system's focus on students as learners. Although Pennsylvania's system was initially focused on economic development, its more recent actions indicate an intent to align school-to-work activities within the framework of the state's education reform agenda. Similarly, Michigan's system, administered by the state's Jobs Commission, displays an increasing alignment with statewide initiatives in support of education reform.

From the beginning of its developmental activities, Oregon's vision for its school-to-work transition system has maintained a clear balance between education reform and work-force development. This vision rests in part on state law creating extensive connections between state initiatives in education reform and work-force development. These connections include, for example, the required involvement of business-community partnerships in many areas of education reform, as well as learning standards and achievement certificates that require evidence of both academic and career-related mastery.

Table 1 shows key features of the states' school-to-work visions.

State Strategies for Making the Vision Concrete

Most of the eight states have moved beyond global vision statements to the task of defining and assembling component pieces of a system and building the relationships among these components. At this stage, a state must make several strategic decisions. Two key questions arise:

- Should an operational vision be developed at the state level as a first step, or should a vision—or multiple visions—emerge through observation of pilot projects?
- Should the school-to-work system be designed as a completely new entity, or should it be built around existing programs?

States' answers to these questions are shaped by state contextual factors and state traditions of governance and control in education and training.

Top Down or Bottom Up: Variability in State Directiveness

Locus of control almost always arises as an issue in reform initiatives involving education and training. Designing and implementing school-to-work

TABLE 1: Key Features of State's Vision for School-to-Work Transition System

Features	Program Emphasis	Top-Down or Bottom-Up Approach	System's Reliance on Existing Programs
California	Improving educational options and experiences	Bottom-up, because of diffences across the state's regions	Plan to fund local pilots with components determined locally
Iowa	Originally emphasized workforce development, but now increasing focus on education	Bottom-up, encouraging local diversity and sharing	No, using STWOA framework only as basis for local grants
Maine	Improving educational options and experiences	Top-down, based on plan for career pathways	Yes, youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and Jobs for Maine's Graduates
Michigan	Originally emphasized workforce development, but now increasing focus on education	Bottom-up, based on broad state guidelines	No, building local programs around career clusters, but with flexibility allowed
Oregon	Balanced between workforce development and education improvement	Top-down, based on state legislation, but existing activities also integrated into system	No, emphasizing collaboration involving both existing and new programs
Pennsylvania	Originally emphasized workforce development, but now increasing focus on education	Balanced, based on broad guidelines and extensive technical assistance	Yes, youth apprenticeship, Tech Prep, and others
West Virginia	Improving educational options and experiences	Top-down, based on Tech Prep consortiums and state technical assistance	Yes, Tech Prep especially
Wisconsin	Improving educational options and experiences	Top-down, based on prescriptive criteria for funding locals	Yes, youth apprenticeship especially

Note: *Shading in column indicates that the state received a School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) Implementation Grant in the first wave of such awards (July 1994).*

Council of Chief State School Officers, Resource Center on Educational Equity, Washington, DC, 1995.

transition systems is no exception to this rule. The eight states in this study vary significantly in terms of their philosophies on state versus local control, particularly with regard to establishing a single statewide vision to guide local implementation.

Top-Down Approaches. Some states have a particularly focused idea of where they want to go and how they want to get there in developing a school-to-work transition system. In their planning for implementation, they have developed well-articulated conceptual frameworks that are intended to guide the thinking and work that will be undertaken at the local level throughout the state.

Maine is an example of a state that has developed a clear statewide vision to guide system implementation. According to its Implementation Grant proposal, Maine views the school-to-work transition initiative as "an opportunity to both expand and institutionalize the Maine Youth Apprenticeship Program," to "re-engineer and integrate other career pathways into a comprehensive statewide system," and to "foster fundamental systemic change in public education." Serving as a framework for this vision is a K–13 education system with seven clearly articulated career pathways, which will eliminate the general education track; the pathways are youth apprenticeship, Tech Prep, pre-

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apprenticeship, cooperative education, occupational preparation, career preparation, and college preparation.

Although Maine is traditionally a local-control state in educational matters, several factors have combined to foster an activist statewide vision for school-to-work transition. First, Maine's governor and the chancellor of the state's technical college system have been key players in promoting improvements in school-to-work transition. They are particularly strong advocates for youth apprenticeship, but they support a broader system as well. Second, in Maine the individual with the most comprehensive understanding of what the system will look like is the state's director of vocational education and school-to-work programming. If vocational programs are to be effectively integrated into the school-to-work system, then his explanatory powers and influence with local educators will be essential, and he is very well situated to carry out this task. One Maine official who firmly believes that change must come from the top down in broad strokes commented, "You have to change a lot of things all at once. The system has a lot of inertia and eats up incremental changes."

Oregon's vision of its school-to-work transition system is also premised on a statewide strategy, primarily because it is so tightly linked to the state's comprehensive 1991 Educational Act for the 21st Century, the 1991 Workforce Quality Initiative, and subsequent legislation. The planned certifications of mastery will apply to all students; and though localities or regions may take somewhat different approaches to specifics, academic and skill standards will drive the system statewide.

Although Wisconsin exerts little direct control over education locally, it is implementing its vision for a school-to-work system through a detailed, local grantmaking process. To obtain state development and implementation grants, a local partnership must demonstrate plans that are consistent with the state's intended progression of experiences for participating students. Through its Request for Proposals (RFP) directed to local partnerships, Wisconsin is in effect establishing its school-to-work framework throughout the state.

It is worth noting that Maine, Oregon, and Wisconsin employed legislation to ground their school-to-work system development. Backed by the governor, Maine enacted legislation in 1992 that secured the Youth Apprenticeship Program a line item in the state's budget. Another occupational preparation program—Jobs for Maine's Graduates—has similar legislative backing. In Oregon, reforming education and building school-to-work opportunities also has sprung from a set of strong laws. Wisconsin's relevant legislation dates back to 1985 and has included provisions supporting school-supervised work experience, career exploration, and applied instruction, as well as the creation of the Office of Workforce Excellence.

The process entailed in the creation and enactment of legislation involves defining terms, building coalitions, negotiating specifics, and securing compromises. When the process is finished and the law is enacted, it is likely to have engaged many supporters who have political and personal stakes in its success. Such a process is similar to the process involved in forming a strong vision, but reaches a step further by securing a statutory commitment to the process and, often, a set of operating policies and practices for use in implementation. Legislation also may make the vision less vulnerable to outside forces that can otherwise erode or redirect it.

Bottom-Up Approaches. Other states are less directive in terms of articulating a relatively uniform, statewide, school-to-work vision. Instead, they are encouraging the development of local or regional visions and allowing more leeway for localities and regions to tailor systems that fit local and regional circumstances. Explaining the reasons for his state's commitment to this type of approach, one state-level official said, "[This state] resists the fed's telling it what to do and [therefore] resists telling local education agencies what to do." In Iowa, for example, the state asks local entities to develop school-to-work transition opportunities within very general state guidelines that reiterate STWOA requirements. The state intends to offer localities opportunities to share their ideas and plans with each other in the early stages of system development. It is too soon to predict the net effect of this strategy. It may be that differences among local school-to-work plans will be fairly minor adaptations of a few big ideas. On the other hand, given a relatively free hand, local school-to-work initiatives could be profoundly different.

Although the majority of Iowa's school-to-work systems-development activity has occurred at the state level within a planning team, the state intends to emphasize growth of a school-to-work transition system through a grassroots, ground-up approach that takes into consideration all school-to-work activities that exist locally. The successes and failures of these school-to-work transition activities at the local level will inform the efforts of the state stakeholders and guidance team as they develop a consensus model for a state school-to-work transition system. The state planning team is concerned that the state should not get too far ahead of local and regional stakeholders by presenting a vision of school-to-work transition that is too prescriptive. "School-to-work is a matter of creating a process," said one official, "not of marketing a program."

Surprisingly, California—a state with a strong tradition of top-down education reforms—plans to expand its school-to-work transition system using a bottom-up approach and exerting minimal state control. According to state respondents, this divergence from otherwise strong state control over education arises from a recognition of the diversity of the state's population and regional economic opportunities.

We earlier indicated that a legislative base for school-to-work system development is important in states seeking to institutionalize a strong vision from the state level. In states where the tendency is to be less directive, legislation related to school-to-work system development sometimes plays a role in indirectly supporting a state's school-to-work vision. Thus, for example, in one of the eight states, school-to-work reports and other documents illustrate the ways in which its school-to-work system supports and is consistent with the state's school-reform legislation. In another state, school-to-work system building is loosely tied to welfare-reform legislation. However, promoting these links to related legislation is not a substitute for giving a school-to-work system its own statutory base. State-level school-to-work system legislation directly establishes a school-to-work vision and can also encourage state-level funding.

Determining Where to Begin in Creating a School-to-Work System

To a large extent, the eight states in this study conceive of school-to-work system development as a process of making inventories of existing programs to determine how the programs and their accompanying resources might be more effectively allocated and managed to serve the career-related needs of students. This process is consistent with the intent of STWOA, which was not designed to support and sustain new programs *per se*. Once the states have completed their inventories, the next step is deciding what kind of glue to use in binding the system together. Among these eight states, some different approaches are emerging.

Reshaping Existing Programs.[1] Some states' development of school-to-work systems consists of reshaping existing programs into a more cohesive, systemic whole. In these states, the programs themselves tend to guide the shape of the system. States that follow this approach—such as Maine and West Virginia—argue that these program structures offer a solid place to start and from which to expand. Moreover, the lessons learned from helping mature programs grow can be applied to other emerging initiatives as the school-to-work system develops. Several states that have not decided on an approach, but appear to be leaning toward reengineering their existing programs, said that this strategy would help to avoid creating new bureaucracy.

On the other hand, re-engineering current programs can produce conflicts over turf, inspire jealousy rather than collaboration, and result in a myriad of distinct programs, as opposed to a single school-to-work transition system. According to the school-to-work transition coordinator in one state involved in redirecting existing programs, policymakers have been active in the development of the state's school-to-work transition system, but "it has been tough to energize the rest of the bureaucracy" because they are accustomed to performing a specific function rather than thinking across programs. "You try to create a common vision [for school-to-work transition], but depending on where [other state officials] are coming from, they read it differently."

[1] We have reviewed this issue here because of its relevance to system vision. We also address it in Chapter 3 from the perspective of strategic decisions shaping system implementation.

Allowing Program Models to Emerge from State-Established Parameters. Another approach is to create the new school-to-work transition system independent of existing programs. Oregon's far-reaching education-reform and work-force-development initiatives require state policymakers to think creatively about school-to-work transition, essentially redefining traditional structures as they consider where the total system should aim. Existing programs may find a niche, but it will be up to them to align themselves with the states' definition of what students should know and be able to do. Oregon's vision is ambitious, requiring a substantial amount of effort, creativity, commitment, and risk taking by a large number of invested players.

Related to the issue of state or local control is the extent to which the state envisions that a consistent array of opportunities will be available to all students statewide. Some states confront this issue squarely by laying out a sequence of school-to-work transition experiences that students in the state will pursue. Others defer to local choice for development of local approaches within the state's general framework. Among other results, these decisions reveal subtle distinctions in the ways that states characterize pathways and program models leading to opportunities.

The Idea of Pathways in System Building. Use of the term *pathways* is increasingly common among the states, but it does not necessarily mean the same thing in each situation. Most of the eight states define "pathways" to mean a series of fairly isolated programs, such as Tech Prep or youth apprenticeship, which students may pursue while earning their high school diploma. These states use the term in a way that allows local entities to define the programmatic opportunities that best suit local needs. Some of these states give much more state-level attention to certain pathways than others. In at least one other state (West Virginia), a pathway represents a sequenced, cohesive set of school-based and work-based learning activities that are fairly uniform statewide for any given career area. West Virginia's conception emphasizes opportunities for student choices, however, so that a student who is heading for a job after high school will have the credits needed to enroll in college instead, if he or she so chooses.

Creating Career Majors. Several states are beginning to develop a conceptual framework for school-to-work transition that is more cross-cutting and comprehensive than the notion of pathways as discrete programs. Career majors (sometimes called *cluster areas*) are broadly defined headings covering a wide range of careers and occupations. This is a different kind of glue for binding a school-to-work system together, because these broad headings can encompass many types of programs and experiences, depending on students' individual interests and capabilities. Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin are in varying stages of defining career majors. Oregon, West Virginia, and Wisconsin envision that all students will concentrate in at least one of several possible areas. In Pennsylvania, these career cluster areas will initially involve only students pursuing Tech Prep and youth-apprenticeship programs.

Involvement in Developing State School-to-Work Visions

To build effective school-to-work transition systems, states must work with all interested or invested people and organizations, including those who work within state government and those who do not, such as local educators, employers, labor leaders, and the public. Most of the states have begun to build a support base through broad involvement in defining the core vision for school-to-work transition. The primary vehicles for this involvement are interagency task forces and stakeholder groups.

Interagency Task Forces Within State Government

In response to the conditions of their Development Grants, all eight states created some type of interagency task force responsible for overseeing system development. In almost all cases, these task forces include representatives from the state education agency, the state economic development or commerce agency, and the state labor or employment agency. Some states—including California, Maine, Michigan, West Virginia, and Wisconsin—also include representatives of the state community college or technical college system as key players on their task forces.

The role of these interagency groups has varied somewhat from state to state. In states where interagency task forces are playing a major role in developing a vision and implementation plan for the school-to-work system, we have found active participation from senior officials who are task force members, as well as more general coordination and collaboration among agencies. Task forces in these states tend to have two tiers: a senior-level tier composed of cabinet-level staff who make final decisions on policy issues and a lower-level tier composed of midlevel officials who oversee the day-to-day operations of the school-to-work system. These states have also worked to clarify the role each agency will play in implementing a school-to-work transition system, stressing the need for clear communication across agencies.

Most of the eight states have interagency task forces involving agency heads with decision-making authority. Among these states, Wisconsin has adopted a particularly noteworthy structure for interagency decision making. As the result of a strategic planning session with an outside facilitator, the state determined that informal state-level relationships around school-to-work transition needed more structure and accountability. To achieve this new formality, Wisconsin established a School-to-Work Cabinet composed of the Secretary of Industry, Labor and Human Relations, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the director of the state technical college system, and the Secretary of the Department of Administration, as well as the president of the University of Wisconsin system and the Secretary of Health and Human Relations, as needed. This group, which met on an ad hoc basis prior to award of Wisconsin's Implementation Grant, now meets monthly. The cabinet is responsible for making final decisions on policy issues, resolving issues raised by staff, and marketing the state's school-to-work vision to the public.

Working with the cabinet in Wisconsin is a school-to-work policy group that is composed of senior staff from the agencies noted previously. This group meets weekly to review issues and recommend policy related to the school-to-work system. A representative from the Department of Public Instruction chairs this group and reports the results of the meetings to the chair of the School-to-Work Cabinet. As a result of the adoption of this structure, state officials report that the three lead cabinet-level officials have formed a much stronger working relationship than existed two years ago.

States where interagency task forces play a lesser role tend to lack a history of interagency cooperation and collaboration. In these states, interagency task forces appear to exist more to meet the conditions of the Development Grant than to define and oversee development of the school-to-work transition system. In these states, interagency task force members were not always encouraged to participate actively in system development and, unlike what they were led to believe when they were invited to participate, were not always given equal voices in the process. In most of these cases, one agency usually made final decisions with little input from the others. For example, in one state, a single state agency was reported to have dominated decision making during the planning phase for the school-to-work transition system; and though the interagency task force members were asked to develop background papers on school-to-work issues, little of their input has been considered so far, according to our interviews.

In some states where interagency task forces play a small role, genuine attempts have been made to forge interagency collaboration. Momentum has been difficult to sustain, however, because of the states' lack of previous collaborative experience and the relatively short period of time that the states were given to develop first-round Implementation Grant proposals. In one state, for example, where the interagency task force developed the state's Implementation Grant proposal, many members of this task force viewed the proposal-preparation responsibility as a very positive step, noting that some of the group's members had never sat down at the same table before, despite common interests. When this state was awarded a smaller grant than the governor had hoped for, however, the group did not sustain fully collaborative decision making. An inner circle of the task force, following explicit instructions from the governor, decided which proposed components would be supported with STWOA resources and which would have to look to other sources of support,

thus dampening the enthusiasm of some task force members.

Enthusiasm about interagency collaboration can also wane if the interagency task force has neither the staff nor the political clout to influence and implement policy. One state, for example, created a collaborative committee composed of representatives from 10 state agencies to support the school-to-work office. Soon after work on the state's Implementation Grant proposal began, the state's school-to-work coordinators became busy with other tasks—and the collaborative committee meetings became less frequent. In addition, no committee member had the seniority to put school-to-work on the agenda of any cabinet-level agency. This lack of political strength at the task-force level limited communication and collaboration among participating agencies.

Stakeholder Groups

In addition to creating interagency task forces, several states have also formed state school-to-work stakeholder groups that contribute their perspectives to the system-development and implementation processes. Typically, these groups include representatives from business, industry, education, organized labor, and community organizations at both the state and local level. In some states, such as Pennsylvania and Michigan, these groups also include representatives from existing school-to-work transition partnerships.

The role of stakeholder groups in most states is twofold: (1) to inform school-to-work policymakers on issues of concern to the sectors that they represent and (2) to enlist the participants' assistance in building support for the state school-to-work system among their peers. Although the stakeholder groups are potentially powerful tools for dissemination of the state's school-to-work vision, several states are finding that they need to educate their stakeholders about the concept of school-to-work transition itself, before expecting members to play active roles. For example, to raise awareness about the concept of school-to-work transition among members of the stakeholder group in Iowa, the state arranged for an orientation session on school-to-work transition presented by Jobs for the Future, using part of the first meeting of the committee for this purpose.

In some states with stakeholder groups, confusion has arisen among group members about their role and authority. For example, one state's stakeholder group, which was created to advise the state's office responsible for school-to-work transition, has questioned to whom it is accountable and what its mandate is. The committee independently decided to submit a report on its members' views of school-to-work system development to the body that appointed them, but expressed frustration and uncertainty about the impact their report might have.

In another state, the confusion concerns the advisory group's tenure and whom it reports to. Created under an executive order of the governor, the advisory group is to operate until the state receives an Implementation Grant. However, members are not clear on the latter point and, in interviews, also expressed uncertainty as to whether they report to the governor or to another, permanent state advisory council.

To bring about lasting change, a clearly articulated vision for school-to-work transition is vital. In an initiative spanning as large a number of players as does school-to-work transition, a shared vision can pull players together and unite them in support of a common goal. Indeed, the process of creating the vision itself can bring about consensus and commitment. Once formed, a strong vision can provide direction for further action, offer a framework for discussion, and serve as a beacon for planning. It can also guide public communication about the initiative. At this point in their development, the visions for school-to-work transition in the eight study states vary considerably in robustness and clarity. Some states are moving confidently into an implementation phase. Others will benefit from additional planning and development time, including time for feedback from local leaders, to achieve greater definition and consensus around their respective visions.

CHAPTER TWO
Involving the Public and Stakeholders in the System

Systems change is at the conceptual center of the national and state visions for school-to-work transition. Realizing this vision, however, will require fundamental shifts in thinking by many groups concerned with the purposes, configurations, and outcomes of K–12 (or K–14) education. Unfamiliar ideas that will need to be learned include the following:

- All students need to prepare for the world of work early, regardless of their post-high school plans.
- Applied academics and performance-based assessment can be effective approaches to learning.
- Work-based and classroom learning can and should be linked, to make each more meaningful.
- Many routes can lead to high-skill, high-wage careers.
- All students learn best when held to high academic and skill standards.

These are bold ideas that parents, students, educators, employers, and the public in general may not be prepared to accept. A 1994 survey conducted by the Public Agenda Foundation indicates that many educational reform measures (e.g., new forms of assessment, cooperative learning) favored by educators are out of step with the concerns of the public (e.g., learning of basic skills). Thus, an important part of states' strategies for implementing school-to-work agendas will be their plans to reach out and persuade the public that providing school-to-work transition opportunities will have real value for all the citizens of the state. Indeed, an emerging theory about achieving statewide systems change suggests that building broad-based support for the purposes and overall structure of the enterprise is a necessary early step in the reform process.[2]

Social Marketing of Educational Programs

The field of social marketing provides a useful framework for analyzing efforts to communicate a vision for school-to-work transition. In the past 10 years, nonprofit and governmental organizations have come to recognize and accept that they, like for-profit companies, must market themselves and their initiatives, programs, products, and services to the customers whom they serve. Though many of these organizations acknowledge the importance of communicating with their customers, far fewer actually follow through with planning and action. In terms of budget priorities, marketing and public communication often seem a luxury, particularly in the early stages of a program or initiative when many other seemingly essential components of the initiative need resources to get the effort off the ground.

Several of the eight states in this study have adopted the potentially problematic—but predictable—strategy of delaying attention to issues of marketing and public communication until the system is more fully developed and hence ready for public scrutiny. Evidence from other large-scale educational reform initiatives (e.g., Outcomes-Based Education), however, has shown that failure to plan for and take action on communicating a vision for change can result in significant public resistance at critical stages of full-scale implementation of the initiative.

Social marketing differs from commercial marketing in several ways. In general, the missions of nonprofit and governmental organizations make marketing a significantly more complicated undertaking for them than it is for private-sector firms. Kotler (1987) identifies several characteristics that make social marketing especially complex. Three of these characteristics are directly relevant to states that are trying to implement school-to-work systems:

- *Consumers of nonprofit goods, services, and messages may be asked to make dramatic shifts in attitudes or behaviors.*

  In the private sector, a marketer simply tries to get consumers to value a product or service more highly than before (or at least more than

[2] Shields, Corcoran, and Zucker (1994) explore this theory in a report on the National Science Foundation's State Systemic Initiative.

they value a competitor's offerings). Seldom does the marketer have a mandate to convert those who oppose the product to favor it. Nonprofit marketers are often asked to do this.

- *Because social change involves complex behaviors and attitudes, large amounts of information must be communicated to consumers in many different ways for them to understand what is being proposed.*

  For example, school-to-work initiatives draw on research from the leading edge of educational reform (e.g., research on applied learning and on the value of intellectual challenge) and work-force development (e.g., research on the value of integrating academic and occupational training with work experience). Not only are these topics complex, they are often wrapped in a jargon that can be daunting, even impenetrable for the average person. Communicating these ideas clearly is a more substantial marketing challenge than selling soap.

- *Often the benefits resulting from the sacrifices that individual stakeholders are asked to make are not immediately evident, or accrue to others.*

  Most educational reform efforts are ostensibly aimed at improving student performance. Often such changes are slow to materialize and difficult to document. This makes the challenge of persuading a teacher to change his or her approach to teaching—an approach that from the teacher's perspective has served well for many years—all the more difficult.

In addition to these aspects of social marketing, campaigns of this type must cater to many types of customers, including groups who have not always made a voluntary decision to become involved in the initiative.

This chapter examines two aspects of the social marketing of school-to-work transition systems. First, we examine the approaches used by states to promote awareness and understanding of school-to-work transition issues. Second, we consider how the states reach out to and involve specific stakeholder groups to encourage their active contribution to the development, implementation, and institutionalization of school-to-work transition systems.

Approaches to Communicating a Vision for School-to-Work Transition

For a state to develop an effective communications strategy for its school-to-work transition system, those responsible for the communications activity must first understand the policy, opportunities, and requirements to be communicated. Without clarity on these points, resources directed toward communication are wasted. The discussion here assumes that the communication strategy is based on such an understanding.

Communications Plans

Having a vision for a statewide system that supports school-to-work transition and having a plan to communicate that vision are different matters. In fact, recognizing the need for a communications plan is a far cry from actually developing and funding one. Unfortunately, organizations in the early stages of a reform initiative are often tempted to view marketing and public outreach as luxuries.

The states included in this study vary in how they communicate their vision of school-to-work transition to relevant constituencies. For example, Pennsylvania has energetically invested attention and resources in a formal strategy for marketing its school-to-work transition system. Falling more toward the middle of the spectrum are states such as Oregon and Wisconsin that have a reasonably clear vision of what they want to promote, but are just beginning to devote real resources to developing structured marketing and outreach plans. Although Maine has not adopted a systematic statewide marketing plan, it has developed formal marketing and outreach programs for several school-to-work pathways, including youth apprenticeship, Tech Prep, and Jobs for Maine's Graduates. Most of the other states are either initiating their planning or have deferred the issue of concerted or formal marketing and public outreach.

Pennsylvania's Experience. As part of its system-development process, Pennsylvania established a school-to-work subcommittee within state government that is responsible for marketing. Headed by state department of labor staff, this group prepared an RFP for a marketing campaign, including: (1) a 5–10-minute videotaped overview of school-to-work

transition opportunities under the state's system; (2) a 30-second public service announcement (PSA); (3) a school-to-work system logo; (4) a recruiting brochure targeted to employers who might provide work-based training opportunities; (5) a portable display on the state's school-to-work system for use at conferences; and (6) a training manual describing the goals and objectives of the school-to-work transition system, along with on-site training modules on its use. The subcommittee budgeted $130,000 for this work.

In addition to state-level efforts, Pennsylvania has also addressed regional and local needs for targeted outreach. The Pennsylvania Department of Commerce, through a contract with the state's Industrial Resource Centers, is responsible for developing and implementing regional marketing plans on school-to-work transition for a variety of audiences, including employers, parents, students, school districts, and organized labor. To address local-level needs, the state has created a School-to-Work Action Team (SWAT) composed of representatives from the Departments of Education, Commerce, and Labor and Industry to visit local sites; they will gather marketing information and also provide technical assistance to local partnerships trying to establish school-to-work transition systems.

In Pennsylvania, the decision to devote special attention to communicating its vision for its school-to-work transition system was influenced by experience in another education reform arena. The movement toward Outcomes-Based Education as a state reform initiative was met with organized opposition from conservative groups. According to one Pennsylvania official, those who opposed Outcomes-Based Education were able to take control of the issue, define it, and discredit it, because the state did a poor job of communicating what Outcomes-Based Education really meant for students and schools. Even though the state ultimately adopted a version of the proposed reform, state officials learned the importance of communicating with the public about a major reform initiative through this experience.

Other States' Experiences. Although Pennsylvania's approach to marketing its developing system is more sophisticated than most, other states understand that marketing is important. For example, in one state, the school-to-work transition staff acknowledge that through their efforts to implement a school-to-work system they have learned that they are not marketing specialists. They realized that they needed professional marketing expertise to assemble a communications and outreach strategy that will engage the public so as to move the school-to-work initiative toward full implementation.

In some cases, the absence of a marketing plan reflects continuing debate about the state's vision for school-to-work transition. In other cases, states have defined their vision, but have chosen not to make coordinated marketing and public outreach a priority yet. In either case, experiences elsewhere suggest that lack of attention to these issues may create problems at later stages of implementation.

Market Research

Despite the fact that most of the eight states have not yet developed coordinated marketing and communications plans focused explicitly on school-to-work transition, most have engaged in, or are planning, ad hoc marketing and communications activities that can be linked to their school-to-work initiatives. However, we are not aware of any efforts by states to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication approaches with particular audiences. Although the effectiveness of any single marketing approach depends on the message and the target audience, more than one approach will usually be necessary to achieve a communications goal. One size does not fit all.

States understandably want to get the largest possible return on their resources invested in communication. However, how and why these states have adopted their varied communication approaches are surprisingly unclear. Carefully targeted audiences and reliable information about the target audience's attitudes and beliefs are important components of a well-conceived communications strategy. States that have not already done so could consider using surveys or focus groups to pinpoint the groups they seek to influence. For example, the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce Association surveyed its members to learn more about their attitudes toward the role of employers in public education. The survey showed that 30 percent of the responding members believe

that it is appropriate for employers to become involved in education. A representative of the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce Association expressed the view that the state would maximize the impact of its marketing and outreach to employers by focusing its initial efforts on that 30 percent. In Oregon, market research has contributed to the development of a communication strategy that will be launched in 1995; surveys conducted by mail and telephone, as well as focus groups, were used to reach employers statewide and determine their concerns and preferences regarding school-to-work transition.

Ad Hoc Communication Strategies

In the states that have gone beyond the planning stage and have taken specific steps to communicate a message about their school-to-work transition system, their approaches are often remnants from earlier efforts to market a program (e.g., youth apprenticeship) that has been incorporated into the school-to-work transition system. However, what these states are discovering is that a school-to-work transition sy*stem* is a more difficult concept to convey than the more straightforward *programs* that they have publicized in the past.

States use several approaches to communicate their messages to the public and key stakeholders, such as distributing brochures, newsletters, and videos; placing advertisements; soliciting media attention; convening public meetings; and emphasizing advocacy by public officials.

Brochures, Newsletters, and Videos. All eight states have developed or plan to produce one or more of these marketing and outreach tools. They are relatively inexpensive, are easy to control, and have the potential to reach large numbers of people. Videos seem to be especially popular as marketing tools, possibly because they are perceived as more compelling than brochures or newsletters. States are developing, or have developed, videos and other materials both for general outreach and for communicating with specific groups such as employers. For example, California has developed two school-to-work videos, which have been disseminated to the state's school-to-work mailing list of 5,500 names. Iowa has also developed a school-to-work awareness video and related school-to-work materials, which it has provided to all Private Industry Council chairs, Job Service Employers Council Board members, community colleges, Job Service Workforce Centers, Area Education Agencies, and JTPA directors; these groups were all asked to share the material with their members.

Advertising. Some states are developing promotional tools akin to commercial advertising. These include public-service announcements for both radio and television and printed inserts in magazines and other publications. Advertising is relatively easy to control but usually expensive to develop and run. It is generally recognized that, for advertising to communicate effectively, the target audience must experience repeated exposure to the message. Examples of advertising-like approaches to communicating a state's school-to-work transition message include Pennsylvania's plan to develop a 30-second PSA and the Oregon Workforce Quality Council's publication of an insert in *Oregon Business Magazine* called "Building the New Worker." The magazine insert addresses topics such as increasing the skills of employees and how employers can become involved in the school-to-work effort, and cites model school/business partnerships across the state.

Media Attention. Television coverage or newspaper articles about model programs generally portray them in a favorable light, but can be difficult to control, in the sense that they tend to focus on the appealing visual images or the personal success stories. School-to-work transition initiatives, however, are closely linked to such politically sensitive issues as educational reform and economic development, which tend to receive mixed reviews in the media. Thus, media coverage of school-to-work initiatives cannot be assumed to be always favorable. Nonetheless, positive stories featuring school-to-work transition can be useful in promoting awareness of and support for the initiative. For example, in Wisconsin the state's school-to-work initiative and youth-apprenticeship program have attracted fairly extensive and mostly positive coverage from newspapers around the state. In addition to the impact of the articles and editorials at the time they are published, the state's school-to-work collaborative team uses copies of

the articles to help promote school-to-work in other contexts.

Public Meetings. Several states have held or plan to hold public meetings to provide a forum for promoting awareness and interest in school-to-work transition and to solicit input from the community and stakeholder groups on a regional or local level. Public meetings can be effective avenues for encouraging discussion and debate about school-to-work transition systems, but it is unclear that they are useful for creating early awareness or support for the initiative. When state officials in California held "town hall" meetings around the state to obtain input for its school-to-work planning process, few people attended other than those scheduled to testify. Pennsylvania is also planning a "town meeting" for business, industry, education, and organized labor leaders to rally support for the expanded school-to-work system; given the fairly extensive familiarity with school-to-work issues in that state, the meeting may achieve different results from those in California.

Promotion by State Leaders. The eight states vary in the level of public endorsement of school-to-work systems that they obtain from their governors. In general, for a governor to support an initiative such as school-to-work transition, he or she must determine that the issue aligns with the political agenda and that the agenda platform has room for the issue. Frequently, articulate support from the governor for the development of a school-to-work transition system can clearly contribute to general public awareness and support.

The governors of Maine, Michigan, West Virginia, and Wisconsin have taken notably active roles in promoting school-to-work transition and, in some instances, the programs such as youth apprenticeship that preceded STWOA. For example, in West Virginia, the governor chairs the state's Workforce Development Council, which has selected school-to-work transition as one of its primary areas of focus. In addition, the governor is one of 13 members of the National Governors Association's School-to-Work Roundtable. This high-profile involvement by the governor has contributed to the public's general level of awareness with regard to school-to-work in this state. Michigan's governor is also a member of the School-to-Work Roundtable, and he chairs the Great Lakes Governors' Workforce Policy group, which has selected school-to-work skill standards as its primary issue.

However, attention from a governor can have both positive and negative effects. In Maine, Governor John R. McKernan was personally involved in recruiting employers to participate in the state's Youth Apprenticeship Program. The governor's support of youth apprenticeship both in public settings and in influencing legislation attracted positive press coverage and allowed youth apprenticeships to become operational in a relatively short period of time. Some people in the state are concerned, however, that the governor's influence, while successful in attracting and promoting youth apprenticeship, will not succeed in sustaining (and may even hurt) the school-to-work system now that he is no longer in office. State respondents suggested that the governor's strong support for youth apprenticeship may have alienated some stakeholders whose cooperation will be important in implementing the more extensive school-to-work system that Maine envisions.

Outreach Strategies for Involving Various Stakeholder Groups

States are not assuming that stakeholders will necessarily perceive school-to-work transition systems to be desirable. In addition to general efforts to communicate their vision for school-to-work transition, most states have pursued various strategies targeted to particular stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Groups Targeted for Outreach

The primary stakeholder groups that states have wooed, or plan to woo, are employers, organized labor, educators, parents, and students.

Employers. Of all the stakeholder populations in the eight states, employers receive the most attention, which seems appropriate given that all eight states perceive that finding enough work-based learning experiences is one of their most serious challenges. State officials report that employers are not yet convinced of the merits of school-to-work transition systems generally and are even less convinced that school-to-work transition will benefit their own business.

One of the challenges for states, as they reach out to employers, is helping them to establish and understand their role in the school-to-work transition system. Programs such as youth apprenticeship usually offer employers concrete roles and responsibilities, where all sides recognize and accept their commitments. A broader school-to-work transition system, however, is a more amorphous creature that offers employers a variety of forms of involvement. Such variety is a concern to some state officials who are afraid that, when given a choice, most employers will opt for the least intensive forms of participation.

In addition to the general promotional activities discussed earlier in this chapter, states have used a variety of approaches for obtaining employer buy-in for their school-to-work systems. One example is Oregon's provision of technical assistance and training to businesses, especially those whose employers work with students in the workplace as mentors, trainers, and supervisors. The state also plans to deliver ongoing support to employers through activities such as formal orientations, training classes, and arranged internships in schools. In Wisconsin, employers who participate in the youth apprenticeship program can apply for reimbursement for the costs of training youth apprentices. Michigan is planning to establish an Employer Council, with representatives from the state's largest businesses, to demonstrate support for the school-to-work initiative. Several states (e.g., Maine, Michigan, Oregon) also use the promise of their emerging school-to-work transition systems to attract new and relocating businesses to their states or to retain existing business and industry.

Membership in stakeholder advisory groups is the primary method used by states to involve employers in system development for school-to-work transition. The most common stakeholder advisory group is just that—a group convened to give key stakeholder populations an opportunity to advise those with responsibility for implementing the state's school-to-work system. Some of the limitations of these groups are discussed later in this chapter.

States also seek employer involvement in advisory groups with more specific objectives. Advisory groups to develop skill standards almost always include employers. In Iowa, a technical committee, with representatives from business, industry, and labor, validates workplace readiness competencies that will be taught in all secondary vocational programs. West Virginia has formed 13 panels of employers to identify career skills for school-to-work transition; these panels will begin work in early 1995. Several other states have established or plan to form similar bodies for the purpose of developing or approving skill standards. (Chapter 4 discusses issues related to skill standards.)

Although states can do much to encourage the involvement of employers in school-to-work transition systems (e.g., develop videos and brochures, coordinate advisory groups, and hold conferences and workshops), the main business participation in the system occurs at a local level because most businesses want to focus on the communities in which they are based. In Pennsylvania, where the regional Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs) have responsibility for coordinating school-to-work transition activities, IRC staff are working to counter an exclusively local focus on the part of employers. One IRC manager who coordinates school-to-work activities in 12 counties in the state has established a school-to-work network of local coordinators for the purpose of generating cross-site collaboration and developing a regional vision for school-to-work transition that goes beyond the "my dollars for my school" attitude.

Despite the efforts of states to attract employers to school-to-work transition systems and convince them that participation will be in their long-term interest, most business leaders remain cautious. Most states would like to see business take a leadership role in school-to-work transition. That leadership, however, has yet to emerge, except in California. The governor's recent veto of the California Learning Assessment System—which had the support of the business community—is being viewed as a setback for school-to-work transition in the state and a disappointment to the business leaders who promoted it, according to respondents we interviewed.

Organized Labor. Organized labor is another group that is frequently invited to participate in school-to-work system development. Participation in general stakeholder advisory groups and skill-standards de-

velopment groups has been the most common means of involving organized labor. Our interviews indicated, however, that their participation often is an afterthought on the part of states once they have realized (or been reminded) that organized labor can disrupt the developmental process if not included. Although organized labor usually finds its way to the table, the involvement it is offered is often intended more to soothe political tensions than to involve labor in a serious way.

Labor leaders in several of the states expressed the opinion that their state school-to-work teams have not done an adequate job of involving labor or taking its concerns into consideration. The head of the AFL/CIO in one state wrote letters to the governor and federal officials opposing the state's Implementation Grant proposal because labor had not been sufficiently included in the initial planning stages of the proposal. Representatives of organized labor were invited to become involved in the proposal-writing process, although state and local officials indicated that, according to one state official, "there has to be some patching up" of the relationship between state agencies and organized labor.

An exception to this general pattern is seen in West Virginia, where organized labor has been a central participant in the development of the state's Registered Youth Apprenticeship model, which is part of the state's overall school-to-work transition initiative.

Educators. Teachers and administrators are widely recognized as essential to the success of any school-to-work transition system. Despite this fact, most states say they need to do more to reach out to educators. The comments of an Iowa education official help to illustrate why educators should not be neglected:

> Parents expect us to help their kids be economically successful after high school graduation. Schools have not really accepted that mission. ...The expectation is there—[with] every employer I ever ran into...and parents—but school staff will clearly tell you, "It's not my job to prepare students for John Deere or another company."

He adds, however, "[Schools] are coming to accept [the responsibility of] preparing kids for economic self-sufficiency."

Aside from limited representation on stakeholder advisory groups, mainstream academic educators have not played an active role in school-to-work system development. Outreach to academic educators has usually taken the form of professional-development conferences and workshops designed to help teachers understand their role in the school-to-work transition system. The involvement of academic educators appears to be growing, however, especially in states and localities that are developing or adopting applied academic courses. In contrast, local vocational educators have displayed interest in the development of state school-to-work transition systems and have taken advantage of opportunities to learn about and participate in state-sponsored informational opportunities.

Parents and Students. State have been less active in their outreach to parents and students than to other groups of stakeholders. By default, parents and students are likely to come into initial contact with the school-to-work transition system through school and career guidance counselors. Although other plans for outreach to parents and students exist, they are not widespread. An exception is Michigan, which includes parents and students in the leadership of local school-to-work partnerships and as members of the state steering committee. An interesting development in West Virginia, however, is the creation of student peer networks to spread the ideas embodied in school-to-work transition, by engaging older students to "sell" the ideas to younger ones.

Outreach Strategies

State systems in the study's eight states are using several different strategies to create support and involvement among stakeholders; these include advisory groups, workshops, conferences, and counseling and career information approaches.

Stakeholder Advisory Groups. As indicated previously, stakeholder advisory groups have been the primary all-purpose strategy used by states to connect with stakeholders and gain their participation and support during the development of a school-to-work transition system. Indeed, inviting stakeholder representatives to participate on a steering committee or similar body is an easy way for a state to protect itself from charges that it has

excluded key groups from the process of school-to-work system development. Iowa's large stakeholder group includes organizations ranging from the Boy Scouts of America to labor unions. Not all stakeholder advisory bodies are so inclusive, however; teachers, parents, and students often have limited or no representation on these bodies.

Even when the group is inclusive, however, it is not clear that advisory committee participation by a stakeholder representative is an effective means of communicating with the larger stakeholder group as a whole. Advisory committee representatives do not necessarily have avenues for disseminating their awareness or understanding of the evolving school-to-work system to their constituents. Further, the participation and support of a state-level representative do not always ensure support for the initiative at the local level. Iowa reports strong participation from organized labor at the state level, for example, but has had difficultly securing its participation at the local level. Though having broad representation on an advisory committee will buy a state time that is free from overt opposition during the development of the system, it does not guarantee support for system implementation.

Workshops and Conferences. Several states have used or plan to hold workshops and conferences as a way of reaching out to stakeholder groups—particularly to employers and educators. Workshops and conferences can create awareness of school-to-work issues and can educate participants about specific aspects of school-to-work transition. For example, in California the Department of Education and the Chancellor's Office of Community Colleges recently sponsored a conference on Tech Prep at which several workshops focused on school-to-work transition. Similarly, Michigan held a conference for employers that featured, among other topics, information about school-to-work transition in both the general and small-group breakout sessions. These conferences are primarily examples of efforts to increase awareness of school-to-work transition. In other cases, states use workshops, in particular, to convey specific information. For example, Maine plans to use Implementation Grant funds to conduct intensive one- and two-day training sessions for teachers in applied academics.

The importance of developing and targeting outreach materials carefully is illustrated by Iowa's experience with school-to-work presentations to teachers. The state's school-to-work planning team conducted several presentations to teachers for the purpose of creating awareness of school-to-work transition by giving an overview of the concept. The planning team members said that their initial presentations were not well received because teachers wanted something to implement in their classrooms immediately.

Counseling and Occupational Information Systems. For many parents and students, school and career counselors are their primary source of initial information about school-to-work transition systems. Many states recognize the important role that counselors can play in communicating with these key stakeholder groups and are trying to develop mechanisms to make the counseling process available and reliable. Chapter 5 discusses the strategies that the eight states are using to improve both counseling and occupational information systems, in connection with state efforts to extend school-to-work transition to a broad range of students.

The many challenges of involving stakeholders in system development and implementation are only a part of the overall task faced by states in establishing structures and procedures for governing state systems for school-to-work transition. In the next chapter, we review some of these challenges and the solutions found to address them.

CHAPTER THREE
Strategies That States Are Using to Implement Planned Systems

This chapter examines the activities that states either are planning or have undertaken to implement their design for state-sponsored systems of school-to-work transition. In particular, we look at states' selection of lead agencies for school-to-work implementation, the state-level policy structures governing school-to-work, system development focused on programs and processes, state interactions with local partnerships, and state plans for expansion and institutionalization.

Selection of Lead State Agencies for School-to-Work Transition

Each of the eight states has established an interagency body that oversees school-to-work transition. In most states, however, one agency has been designated to play a lead role in developing the state's school-to-work transition system. Our research indicates that the agency leading the development of the state's plan is not always the agency responsible for implementing that plan. In some states, school-to-work system-building efforts have occurred on an interim basis in a certain agency or bureau within an agency, with the expectation that implementation of the school-to-work transition system will be housed later in a different organizational base. For example, in West Virginia, interim responsibility for school-to-work transition system building has been placed in the Office of the Secretary of Education and the Arts—an advisory unit within the governor's office—to facilitate interagency collaboration and linkages across programs and policy areas. Because that office is not equipped to direct large-scale implementation of the initiative, however, the state is now deciding whether the Department of Education or the Joint Commission on Vocational-Technical-Occupational Education will lead the implementation phase.

In Pennsylvania, the state's school-to-work coordinator, formerly the youth apprenticeship coordinator, is based in the Office of the Secretary of Education. This organizational home is viewed as an interim location for the governance of school-to-work transition until a decision is made about which office in the education department will have ongoing responsibility for implementation. Factors in the decisions in both Pennsylvania and West Virginia include finding a home that (1) has the administrative capacities to carry out all the required components but (2) is perceived as capable of serving as an honest broker among all the state-level people and organizations potentially involved in the system.

Two states, Wisconsin and Michigan, have established offices with full-time staff to implement their school-to-work transition systems under the guidance of interagency task forces. Michigan created an Office of School-to-Work Transition that is staffed by two midlevel state administrators but is slated to grow to a staff of eight. In Wisconsin, the Office of Workforce Excellence has been designated as the fiscal agent for the state's Implementation Grant and is a key player in implementation decisions.

Role of the Governors

STWOA gave each governor wide latitude to determine how the school-to-work transition system would be developed, what its focus would be, and where the administration of the initiative would be located. This assignment of responsibilities to the governor opened school-to-work systems to certain political pressures, particularly in 1994. With the exception of West Virginia, all of the eight states in this study held gubernatorial elections within a few months of our visit. Although the elections were not always a major influence on decisions about school-to-work transition governance and implementation or how active a role the governor would play in the development of the state's system, the gubernatorial elections elevated the political consequences of such decisions. In general, school-to-work transition was not a major gubernatorial campaign issue and received less attention in the governor's races than did those issues that were considered to be more politically salient. For example, in Iowa and elsewhere, where governors were up for reelection (and in many cases were reelected), welfare reform received much more attention in the campaigns than did school-to-work transition.

Whereas school-to-work transition received little attention as a campaign issue, governors in some of the eight states did locate responsibility for system development in agencies where they could exert influence and control, if only until after the elections. For example, in California the governor designated the Employment Development Department, which reports directly to him, to facilitate a process in which the Governor's Task Force would develop a school-to-work-transition system, rather than the state's Department of Education, whose superintendent is elected by the public.

In addition to gubernatorial elections, other factors, such as Tech Prep and other vocational education programs, influenced governors in their selection of the interim or permanent lead agencies.

Momentum Behind Other State-Sponsored Initiatives

Governors in the eight states tended to select as lead agencies for school-to-work transition efforts those offices that are also spearheading other related initiatives supported by the governor. For example, in Maine, the state education agency is the fiscal agent for the STWOA grant; but the technical college system, which administers the state's youth-apprenticeship program, is overseeing three-quarters of the school-to-work Implementation Grant funds and is also a key player in the state's Tech Prep and Pre-Apprenticeship programs. The Maine Youth Apprenticeship Program was the creation of the governor and the chancellor of the technical college system. Governance decisions regarding school-to-work transition reflect their view of youth apprenticeship as the centerpiece of Maine's school-to-work transition system, as well as the centrality of the technical college system to the state's agenda for economic recovery and growth.

Though responsibility for oversight of state school-to-work systems development tends to be located in the agency leading a similar or related initiative supported by the governor, the development efforts per se do not necessarily receive a great deal of the governor's attention. In some instances, other parts of a broad social-policy initiative are overshadowing school-to-work transition. Elsewhere, other political and governance issues that are important to large or powerful constituencies receive the bulk of the governor's attention.

Perceptions of Vocational Education

Despite being the main provider of vocational education, the state division of vocational or technical education is the lead agency for state school-to-work transition initiatives in only two of the eight states (Maine and Oregon). In a few states, state-level vocational educators were not invited to participate in developing the state's Development Grant or Implementation Grant proposals. In several instances, senior vocational education officials complained to the study team about their exclusion from the proposal-development process.

The perceived negative image of vocational education by state school-to-work transition officials in at least two states has been a key factor in determining where school-to-work transition system development efforts would be housed. In one state, officials feared that, if responsibility for school-to-work transition were given to the vocational education office, it would not be taken seriously either by the business community or as part of an education-reform effort because of a stigma attached to vocational education programs in that state. Officials in some states voiced concern, however, that when states do not give state divisions of vocational education a bigger role early in the governance of school-to-work transition systems, states may encounter difficulty in bringing systems to scale and institutionalizing them later on.

The State Policy Structure Governing School-to-Work Systems

This section examines the relationship between school-to-work system-development and two critical components of state policy structures: state legislation and the actions of state boards of education.

Role of Legislation in School-to-Work Transition Systems and Related Policy

The role of legislation in developing school-to-work transition policy varies according to the political culture of the state. For example, in Pennsylvania

a key state legislator described the legislature as "timid about taking the initiative" on education initiatives and, as a result, school-to-work transition system-building efforts have not been grounded in legislation. However, in Wisconsin, where the legislature takes a more active role in state policy, school-to-work transition is supported by a series of laws, including legislation requiring (1) all students to have access to school-supervised work experience, (2) the development of an educational assessment system, and (3) the establishment of a youth-apprenticeship program and an office to oversee school-to-work transition system development efforts.

The three most common types of school-to-work transition-related legislation are as follows:

- *Legislation that creates and authorizes specific school-to-work transition programs or program-delivery mechanisms*

  States that have such legislation include Iowa, Maine, Oregon, and Wisconsin.

- *Education-reform legislation that complements the development of a school-to-work transition system*

  Most of the eight states have such legislation.

- *Legislation that consolidates responsibility for work-force development and training programs (e.g., JTPA)*

  Oregon has such legislation. (Michigan's consolidation was created by an executive order of the governor.)

Legislation Authorizing School-to-Work Transition Programs. This type of legislation often focuses on school-to-work transition programs that prescribe a strong work-based learning component, usually youth apprenticeship. For example, in Maine, after the state was awarded a DOL youth-apprenticeship grant, the legislature (at the governor's urging) passed a law establishing the Maine Youth Apprenticeship Program. This legislation prescribed specific program components of the program and designated the state's technical-college system as the program's administrator. Jobs for Maine's Graduates, a career pathway targeted toward preparing at-risk youth for the work force, also has a legislative base in the state.

Education-Reform Legislation. Almost all of the eight states have passed some form of education legislation that complements or encourages the development of school-to-work transition systems. In some cases, this legislation was accompanied by laws that created specific school-to-work transition programs. For example, in Oregon, five pieces of legislation related to education reform and school-to-work transition were passed in 1991. This legislation requires the development of Certificates of Initial Mastery and Advanced Mastery (as discussed in Chapter 4). In addition, the legislature established "Oregon Benchmarks," or quantifiable goals to measure progress toward the state vision for integrating economic development with work-force and education reform.

A few states have enacted legislation intended to strengthen links between higher education and vocational education. In Iowa, the state enacted vocational-education standards requiring vocational-education offerings to be articulated with courses in local community colleges. In 1992, West Virginia passed legislation that requires colleges and universities to (1) establish closer ties to economic development efforts and business and community organizations; (2) develop greater opportunities for students to experience the world of work through internships, apprenticeships, and cooperative education programs; and (3) communicate and serve the work-force development needs of their region. In addition, a joint administrative board was authorized to promote the sharing of facilities between higher education and the public schools.

In many instances, education-reform legislation has provided a policy base on which to build school-to-work transition systems by including language about preparing students for the modern work force. In addition, the legislation often requires each local education agency to develop a plan to meet the goals of a state's education-reform efforts, which provides an opening for the state to encourage the schools to build school-to-work transition into their long-range plans. For example, in Pennsylvania, as part of the state's education-reform initiative, each district is required to develop and submit to the Department of Education a six-year strategic plan; the state also established regional teams to assist schools in incorporating school-to-work transition into these plans.

Legislation Pulling Training Programs Together. As noted previously, some states, such as Oregon, have enacted legislation to bring the various authorities for work-force development and training programs together under one agency or council. Legislation often places school-to-work transition opportunities within the purview of such a body. In Oregon, the legislature created a Workforce Quality Council to serve as the state's human resources investment council. This council directs the integration of the state's economic development efforts with other major state initiatives, including school-to-work transition.

As part of their coordination effort, some states, such as Iowa and Oregon, are also developing regional work-force quality committees to integrate planning and delivery of work-force education, training, and job placement at the regional and local level. These regional bodies are expected to play a key role in school-to-work system development and coordination among local sites in their region.

The impact of these coordination and consolidation efforts on the development of school-to-work transition systems varies, depending on the priorities of the governance body that the legislation creates, which often reflect the priorities of the governor. In some states—most notably West Virginia and Oregon—school-to-work transition has been designated as a main focus of these entities. However, in other states—such as Iowa—being placed in a large, complex, and newly formed governance body has meant that school-to-work system building has been overshadowed by competing priorities that may be more politically attractive, such as welfare reform.

Eventually, the close links of school-to-work transition with other reform initiatives should benefit all concerned. However, in states where school-to-work is not yet a high priority, it runs the risk of being isolated from related initiatives and having to compete for attention amid older, more established programs and initiatives.

Future Legislation. In states that have not enacted legislation on school-to-work transition, state officials view legislation as a critical step toward the institutionalization of a statewide system, particularly because legislation makes system development less vulnerable to changes in political leadership. In these states, the question for state school-to-work officials is not whether school-to-work legislation should be proposed, but when. For example, in California, where no school-to-work legislation existed at the time of our study, there are opposing views as to when and what type of legislation should be enacted. One view is that legislation should not be enacted until the end of the five years of an anticipated Implementation Grant period in order to allow a policy consensus to emerge that identifies the most effective demonstration programs in the state. The opposing view is that legislation should be passed next year and amended annually based on what is learned from the demonstration sites funded by the anticipated Implementation Grant. Proponents of this approach believe that legislation will be the most effective way to sort out contentious governance issues and promote collaboration.

Role of State Boards of Education

With the exception of Wisconsin, which has no state board of education, all state boards in our sample have had some impact on the development of statewide school-to-work transition systems. In a few states, the state board's policy decisions have affected the direction of school-to-work transition. For example, Maine's Board of Education established a Learning Results Task Force to oversee the development of learning-outcome standards. The task force is currently focusing on learning outcomes that will be required for a student to receive a Certificate of Core (or Initial) Mastery at the end of 10th grade. This certificate is viewed as a gateway to both college prep and the six career pathways the state envisions as part of its school-to-work transition system. New board leadership is also a factor in this state. The president of the Maine Council on Vocational Education, a strong advocate for vocational education, was recently elected president of the Board of Education and is expected to keep school-to-work transition issues high on the board's agenda.

In Oregon, current legislation specifies that the state department of education must develop six broad fields in which students may pursue a Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM). As part of the pursuit of a CAM, students will be encouraged to participate

in a work-based learning experience. Four-year institutions in the state proposed "college prep" as a seventh endorsement area. Some state school-to-work transition staff were concerned that the result would be a divided system—college-bound and noncollege-bound—which would not require students in college prep to participate in work-based learning. The Board of Education, which is appointed by the governor, ruled that college prep could not be its own field, ensuring that, at least in theory, all students who pursue a CAM will participate in some type of work-based learning.

System Development Focused on Programs Versus Processes

During the period of this study, the eight states had either developed or were developing implementation plans, although little in the way of system implementation was actually taking place. Implementation was slow for several reasons. Gubernatorial elections and uncertainty about funding had the effect of putting implementation on hold in some states. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 1, many states did not yet have a clear vision of what a statewide school-to-work transition system would look like, making implementation activities premature.

Despite these problems, most states have taken some steps to implement school-to-work transition systems. Two broad approaches to implementing a school-to-work system are evident in the eight states: (1) program-focused efforts that emphasize the use of existing state school-to-work program models (e.g., youth apprenticeship, Tech Prep) as the basis for a statewide school-to-work system and (2) process-oriented efforts that emphasize support for regional or local partnerships.

Program-Focused System Development

States with active school-to-work programs (such as youth apprenticeship and Tech Prep) already in place tend to use these programs as their centerpiece. These states include Maine, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Youth apprenticeship is the school-to-work transition program that has received the most attention among the eight states, probably because these states had all previously received youth-apprenticeship grants. One state staff person in Wisconsin described youth apprenticeship's role in state system development as the tip of the iceberg pulling school-to-work along."

In addition to the momentum behind states' existing school-to-work programs, states emphasized a single program for other reasons. In the three states with active youth-apprenticeship programs, a model for youth apprenticeship already existed and, in some instances, so did workplace standards. For example, in Wisconsin, the state has developed an extensive certification process that a local site must undergo to be recognized as a certified youth-apprenticeship program.

In Maine, state officials stress the importance of the quality of youth-apprenticeship experiences—rather than the quantity of youth apprentices—as being most important in establishing a school-to-work system that is viewed credibly by parents, students, educators, and businesses. To maintain this quality, the state has developed work-based standards in 15 career clusters.

Although the momentum behind a state's most developed school-to-work programs and the opportunity to use a developed program as a base for its school-to-work system are appealing to state school-to-work transition officials, there may be drawbacks to using this approach. No state envisions that youth apprenticeship can serve all students, with even the most optimistic estimates anticipating that the program cannot serve more than 20 percent. In addition, school-to-work system development in these states has tended to fit school-to-work transition around the established youth-apprenticeship program, rather than trying to integrate youth apprenticeship into a larger vision of school-to-work transition. Indeed, in most program-focused states, state officials usually talk about youth apprenticeship when asked about school-to-work transition.

This response did not occur in all states where youth apprenticeship has been the main focus. For example, in Pennsylvania, a state with a large-scale youth-apprenticeship program, people have taken care to prevent youth apprenticeship from dominating the school-to-work transition system. The state is providing joint training sessions to local

coordinators of Tech Prep, youth apprenticeship, and High Schools That Work programs, for example, to promote coordination and sharing across these program areas.

Process-Oriented System Development

States without strong youth-apprenticeship structures at the state level tended to approach their system-building efforts by providing a framework—usually like the one outlined in STWOA—in which a school-to-work transition system would emerge, based on the experiences of local or regional partnerships. The state role in these locations is to support local and regional partnerships with funding and technical assistance, rather than by providing a prescriptive model for them to follow. States using this approach include California, Iowa, Michigan, and Oregon.

In Iowa, the state has awarded funds from its Development Grant to local partnerships in each of 15 regions, giving the partnerships broad latitude to develop their own school-to-work transition system within the STWOA framework. State school-to-work transition officials stress the consensus process they are using to develop a state system. To ensure input from all parts of the state, the state stakeholder committee advises state officials responsible for developing a school-to-work transition system.

Process-oriented states appeared wary about creating anything that might be perceived as a new state bureaucracy empowered to tell school districts what to do. These states, in the words of one state official, do not want to be "so presumptuous as to recommend creating a new policy structure" for school-to-work transition. This wariness also may stem from election-year politics and promises by governors not to increase the state bureaucracy, which were prominent features in the campaigns of some process-oriented states.

Some state officials anticipate that, as a result of this sensitivity to local control, when a school-to-work system model emerges in these states, it will be more readily accepted because local partnerships, including vocational educators, will have had a key role in developing it. This sensitivity to local partnerships was not necessarily present in program-focused states, where state officials are encountering resistance from some local school officials who view the state's school-to-work vision as being too prescriptive, too "top down," or too narrow in focus for their liking. One vocational educator described the youth-apprenticeship program in his state as being "driven by outsiders" at the state level rather than by local educators. He noted that he was the only local vocational educator who was invited to work on his state's Implementation Grant proposal.

Though not providing a prescriptive model around which a school-to-work transition system should be built, some process-oriented states provide examples at the state level of collaborative processes that can be used by local partnerships in developing school-to-work transition systems. As mentioned previously, Iowa officials stress the importance of consensus in developing its state system. In Michigan, the Jobs Commission itself serves as a model of collaboration for local partnerships.

States using a process-oriented approach have encountered some difficulties. In emphasizing the development of a nonprescriptive system from the ground up, states can reinvent the wheel and overlook knowledge and efforts that already exist at the state level, in some cases alienating individuals who could serve as potential resources. For example, in one state, the state's school-to-work interagency task force conducted its work without significantly drawing on the efforts of either the state's youth- apprenticeship or Tech Prep initiatives. The state's school-to-work transition coordinator deliberately staffed the team so that there were no group members with experience with either of these programs, to avoid either program's dominating the school-to-work transition initiative. There are indications that this decision may make it difficult to achieve an integrated state-level system. The state staff who lead the state's youth-apprenticeship and Tech Prep initiatives said that they are currently operating their programs without much consideration of how the programs interact with the state's school-to-work system building.

Other potential weaknesses of the process-oriented approach include the following:

- *Complexity of explaining the system vision*

  As we discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, few of the eight states are making significant

progress in communicating the concept of school-to-work transition. States with a program focus may have an easier time explaining school-to-work transition, using existing and developed high-end program models such as youth apprenticeship to explain the initiative, compared to states where no program model exists.

- *Time needed to see results*

  Whereas program-focused systems can draw on the successes of the flagship program for evidence of concrete results that measure their success, it may take longer for process-oriented states to see results. For example, several of the process-oriented states are serving fewer students in state-supported school-to-work transition programs than are states that have focused on youth apprenticeship, such as Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Relationship Between Programs and System Development Efforts

In several states, it is unclear how the state envisions that the state-level governance structures of existing school-to-work transition programs (e.g., youth apprenticeship, Tech Prep) will meaningfully mesh with the governance structures for system-development efforts. Current interactions are fairly minimal in several states, despite state goals that call for more integration of existing school-to-work transition programs. A few states are making an effort to integrate existing school-to-work transition programs; in other states, however, school-to-work transition programs continue to develop apart from school-to-work system building.

Integration of existing school-to-work programs is difficult, in part, because of skepticism among state and local program coordinators that the school-to-work transition efforts will be sustained. This skepticism has made them wary about participating in an initiative that might turn out to be short lived.

Such skepticism is not prevalent in all states, however. Oregon's approach to system implementation seems to have helped the state avoid turf battles between school-to-work programs. The state's Bureau of Labor and Industries and the state education department shared leadership in developing the state's youth-apprenticeship initiative. Receipt of an Implementation Grant has broadened the state's school-to-work initiative beyond youth apprenticeship, focusing increasingly on the integration of school-to-work principles with goals of education reform. One official from the Bureau of Labor and Industries summed up this shift saying, "There has been an evolution of the whole concept. Youth apprenticeship was in [our bureau] because we could do that—it made sense. Now, with the broader, structured work-based learning, youth apprenticeship is going to be a small part of it."

State Interactions with Local Partnerships

In interviews, state officials said that their emerging school-to-work systems are interacting with local partnerships in at least two ways: (1) by awarding grants, as required of states that receive STWOA Implementation Grants, and (2) by providing technical assistance. Some states, including Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Oregon, plan to use intermediary or regional structures to carry out one or both of these tasks.

Grantmaking Strategies

Although not all states have used their Development Grant funds to award grants to local partnerships, all of the Implementation Grant states have a plan or are working on a plan for awarding Implementation Grant funds to local partnerships. At the time of our site visits, however, no state that had received an Implementation Grant had yet awarded grants to local partnerships from these funds, although Oregon awarded its first four subgrants in October 1994 and Wisconsin was in the final stage of preparing an RFP that was distributed statewide in October.

Planned grantmaking strategies among states reflect their approach to implementation. For example, in Michigan, where the emphasis has been on allowing local partnerships to develop their own school-to-work systems, the state passed almost all of its Development Grant funds and earlier DOL youth-apprenticeship funds along to local partnerships, in the form of planning and implementation grants through an RFP process. The state

plans to use a similar approach with its Implementation Grant funding, with each partnership application evaluated based on its plans for achieving STWOA's major system components.

Wisconsin has based its implementation strategy on a program-oriented approach, as reflected in its RFP, which requires local sites to respond to the three STWOA components (school-based, work-based, and connecting activities). The RFP also includes benchmarks for school- and work-based learning, indicating actual numbers and percentages of students involved in these activities at the beginning of the project and the percentage increase they project over the next five years of implementation (as discussed in Chapter 5).

Plans in the eight states for making awards to local partnerships fall into three categories: (1) competitive or discretionary grant awards to local partnerships; (2) noncompetitive grants to developed partnerships; and (3) regional grant awards (competitive and noncompetitive).

Competitive or Discretionary Grant Awards to Local Partnerships. States that plan to award on a competitive or discretionary basis typically allow any local partnership to apply. These states have developed RFPs that require local partnerships to show, at a minimum, how their application responds to the requirements for school-to-work transition systems in STWOA. Both Michigan and Wisconsin award grants to local partnerships on a competitive or discretionary basis. But the requirements for prospective grantees in each state are different. Pennsylvania also awards grants to local sites on a competitive basis.

Noncompetitive Grants to Developed Sites. One state, West Virginia, has decided to award its Development Grant funds on a noncompetitive basis to mature Tech Prep consortiums, operating what are known in West Virginia as Tech Prep Associate Degree Programs. The state views this approach as the most appropriate starting point for establishing school-to-work transition opportunities because it uses voluntary associations of local service providers that have already been working together to develop school-to-work transition systems. One potential drawback of this strategy is that localities that are not members of the Tech Prep Associate Degree Programs consortiums initially will be less involved in the state school-to-work transition system, leaving them behind in terms of school-to-work transition development. When the state receives an Implementation Grant, additional consortiums will be encouraged to apply for funds.

Regional Grant Awards. A third group of states plans to award school-to-work transition grants on a competitive and noncompetitive basis to local partnerships in designated regions. These geographic areas usually correspond to regions established for education or economic-development programs. For example, Iowa awarded $159,000 from its Development Grant to local partnerships in each Area Education Agency region. Area Education Agencies are funded by the Iowa state education agency to provide technical assistance to school districts in their region. Other states plan to use regions designated for the distribution of Perkins Act funds or regions established for other work-force-development initiatives. School-to-work officials in these states believe that using a regional template for awarding grants will help ensure that coordinated school-to-work transition activity takes place in all parts of their states and that funding for these activities is distributed evenly. Besides Iowa, Oregon and Maine also plan to award grants based on designated regions.

Intermediary/Regional Governance Structures. In addition to serving as geographic templates for grant awards, officials in some states see regional structures serving the following functions:

- Providing technical assistance to local sites
- Encouraging business participation
- Gathering information on local school-to-work transition sites for the state
- Assisting schools in integrating school-to-work transition into their long-term planning
- Awarding planning grants to local sites

Pennsylvania is an example of a state that is using an established regional structure—its network of Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs)—to help coordinate and implement its school-to-work transition program. The state developed a network of eight IRCs initially to assist manufacturers in becoming more productive. The regionally based centers provide technical assistance to small- and mid-sized

firms across the state. Funded by the state Department of Commerce, each IRC also employs a school-to-work transition coordinator who supports the development of school-to-work transition activities, recruits manufacturing business and industry to provide school-to-work transition opportunities to students, and develops and implements regional marketing plans on school-to-work transition for a variety of audiences.

Officials in states that plan to use or currently use regional structures to implement school-to-work transition systems anticipate that officials working at the regional level will be more likely to understand the specific needs—both educational and business—of that region, and will thus be able to help local partnerships tailor school-to-work transition activities to regional opportunities and needs. School districts and local businesses, however, may not view themselves regionally in the same way that the state does. Existing regional structures may be convenient for the state for system implementation purposes, but may mean little to employers.

Technical Assistance

Regardless of their approach to implementing school-to-work transition systems, all states have envisioned providing technical assistance to school districts and local partnerships as a major—if not primary—role of states. However, most states had not yet decided on a structure for providing technical assistance during the period of our study.

Despite a lack of formal structure for technical assistance, all states provide some technical assistance to local sites. Table 2 shows the types of technical assistance that states are providing. Common approaches to providing technical assistance, include (1) provision of technical assistance through regional bodies or consortiums drawing on the experience of developed sites (Oregon, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin); (2) technical assistance provided by state-level school-to-work transition programs (Maine, Oregon); (3) technical assistance from contracted providers (Michigan); and (4) contracts with local sites to develop model technical assistance components such as teacher training models (Maine).

Some states have begun to provide technical assistance across school-to-work transition programs. For example, Maine's Youth Apprenticeship Program and the state Tech Prep coordinator plan to use Implementation Grant funds to conduct four intensive one- and two-day training sessions for teachers in applied academics.

A few states have articulated a clear structure for the provision of technical assistance. These states have tended to build on the technical-assistance structures they had developed for earlier school-to-work transition programs, most notably youth apprenticeship. In Pennsylvania, for example, the Department of Education has held regular technical assistance conferences for teams from local sites that were awarded state youth-apprenticeship planning grants. These conferences, which often involve the IRCs, cover a range of topics including curriculum development, marketing, and mentor training, and draw heavily on the experience of more established sites, which often send representatives to make workshop presentations. Pennsylvania has also developed a memorandum of understanding among the three main departments involved with school-to-work transition (commerce, education, and labor and industry); this memorandum outlines the types of technical assistance that each department will provide local sites.

Plans for Expanding and Institutionalizing School-to-Work Systems

State plans for expanding and institutionalizing school-to-work transition systems in the eight states are vague, because most states are still struggling with what they see as more immediate issues, such as communicating their vision and establishing a governance structure. In addition, state plans for institutionalization tend to be only tentatively linked to their implementation plans. Many uncertainties, many questions surround institutionalization of any statewide system. "Will the new governor support the school-to-work transition initiative as much as the last governor did?" "Will funding be available at the state and local level to sustain the new system?" "Will the state economy take a downturn, thus necessitating new workforce-development priorities?" Questions such as these represent critical concerns that remain unresolved in most states.

TABLE 2: Types of Technical Assistance Provided by States to Local Partnerships

Type of Assistance	California	Iowa	Maine	Michigan	Oregon	Pennsylvania	W. Virginia	Wisconsin
Mentor training	✔[c]		✔[b]			✔		✔
Strategic planning					✔	✔	✔	✔
Training for school-to-work transition coordinators				✔		✔		✔
Assessment			✔[c]	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Dissemination of school-to-work transition information and materials	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Curriculum development					✔	✔		✔
Marketing to public	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Help in applying for school-to-work transition grants				✔				✔

Note: *Shading in column indicates that the state received as School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) Implementation Grant in the first wave of such awards (July 1994)*

[c] ✔ For Integrated Curiculum only

[b] ✔ For youth apprenticeship only

[c] ✔ For Tech Prep only

Council of Chief State School Officers, Resource Center on Educational Equity, Washington, DC, 1995.

Some of the weak links between implementation and institutionalization reveal uncertainty as to how a statewide system should be developed. For example, California is planning to use most of its anticipated Implementation Grant funding to support a small number of school-to-work transition demonstration sites over the five-year grant period. By then, the state anticipates that a policy consensus will emerge that will identify the most effective demonstration programs and provide a framework for legislation that will institutionalize the state system.

Despite uncertainty and confusion about institutionalization, however, some of the eight states have a vision of how to proceed. A few states have sought to build school-to-work transition into the long-range strategic planning required of all local sites. In Oregon, school districts are required by law to develop plans to implement a program that provides students with multiple work-based options to earn a Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM). Every student who pursues a CAM—whether college-bound or not—will have participated in some form of work-based learning. In Pennsylvania, the state has established regional teams with representatives from the Department of Education, the Department of Labor and Industry, JTPA Service Delivery Areas, the IRCs, and existing school-to-work transition projects to assist schools in incorporating school-to-work transition into school districts' six-year strategic plans mandated by the state.

Even as states are beginning to implement parts of their plans, some state officials involved in school-

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to-work transition voice concerns about the effects of these plans on institutionalization. These concerns center around the difficulty of bringing systems to scale, maintaining the quality of school-to-work transition experiences as systems expand to serve all students, and integrating systems with other parts of the state bureaucracy. For example, state school-to-work transition staff in one state have been involved in the day-to-day operations of each youth apprenticeship site, even though the youth apprenticeship program is in its second year. One official described the state's situation as "having four pilot programs and one second-year program." This official continued, "The quality of the program is what wakes me up in the middle of the night. How do you deliver the same quality to more kids?"

Other state officials cited the concern that focusing on one particular school-to-work program as the basis for developing a system may be a liability in terms of going to scale. "To develop a school-to-work transition system," said one state official, "you can't say 'I'm going to take these 20 kids and do a project'; you have to do it across the board."

This task is easier said than done. In some cases, to make a school-to-work transition program operational in a short period of time, states have opted to work around existing state structures. This approach may work to establish a program quickly, but it may be counterproductive to developing a system in the long run. "What's made [the youth-apprenticeship program] great is that it hasn't had to deal with the bureaucracy," said one state official, who also noted that the irony of this success is that "the longer [the youth-apprenticeship program] stays outside the system, the harder it will be to get all schools involved."

In those states without specific school-to-work transition legislation, state officials viewed legislation as essential to the institutionalization of their systems. They believe that without legislation, school-to-work transition becomes—in the words of one legislator—"just another program," operating on an ad hoc basis that is vulnerable to changes in political leadership.

Implicit in all states' plans is the necessity of achieving widespread understanding and buy-in from the business community, school officials, parents, teachers, and students if their school-to-work systems are to be institutionalized. As indicated in Chapter 1, how this buy-in will be achieved is not yet clear. As one official recommended, "Go with the more innovative [school-to-work transition] schools and then through shame, the rest will follow."

CHAPTER 4
States' Efforts to Establish Skill Standards

For several years, the reform rhetoric in education and training has emphasized the need to move toward a "standards-based" system. In the current reform context, these standards are assumed to be "world class"—that is, benchmarked to high expectations for the achievement of all students, thus matching or exceeding the standards for precollegiate education in the other developed nations of the world.

Most recent federal education and training legislation, including STWOA, incorporates this conception of standards. In fact, Goals 2000: Educate America Act and STWOA are intended to work together to promote the development and adoption of such standards; any skill standards developed by the states under STWOA are expected to be generally consistent with the voluntary national skill standards that will be developed by the National Skill Standards Board under the auspices of Goals 2000. In addition, to address the STWOA requirement to integrate vocational and academic learning, developers of state school-to-work transition systems will need to be familiar with the academic standards developed by state education agencies under their Goals 2000 state plans or other, related systemic-reform activities.

Under STWOA, states are not explicitly required to develop their own skill standards. They must, however, offer participating students a credential that:

> ...certifies that a student has mastered skills at levels that are at least as challenging as skill standards endorsed by the National Skill Standards Board established under the National Skill Standards Act of 1994, except that until such skill standards are developed, the term 'skill certificate' means a credential issued under a process described in the approved State plan.

This legislative language creates a dilemma for the states as they move ahead with their planning and, in some cases, implementation of school-to-work transition systems. Should they wait for model standards to be approved at the national level or develop their own (hoping, of course, that the standards they establish are "at least as challenging")? In a number of cases, this question is answered by the fact that students are already in the school-to-work pipeline and are working toward credentials that must be rigorous and meaningful to ensure their later success. STWOA may not require states to engage in standards development, but necessity is generating its own momentum for standards development.

This chapter examines the ways in which the eight states are thinking about and acting on their need to define standards. It tells a story of considerable variation around issues of what standards are, the current scope of the state activities in this area, and state-level concerns about utility, relevance, and cost of planned standards.

Differing Conceptions of Standards Among the States

The language about standards in STWOA contains at least two definitions of the term: Standards are referred to as both (1) benchmarks for expected student outcomes that are pegged high enough to ensure the ultimate goal of a well-prepared and highly skilled work force and (2) common definitions of what is required to succeed in a job or career path so that the individual's education and training meet some generally agreed-on norms. The two definitions, of course, are interrelated; and both are important underpinnings of an effective, high-quality school-to-work system. In the day-to-day world of planning and implementing such a system, however, it is sometimes difficult to maintain a focus on both meanings, especially since discussion and activity about standards in the eight states tend to focus on one definition or the other.

Setting High Standards

STWOA incorporated this conception of standards when it defined a skill certificate as a "credential that certifies that a student has mastered skills that are benchmarked to high-quality standards." This meaning is the sense in which the word *standards* is typically used today in discussions of academic reform. Thus, for example, many states have developed or are formulating math standards

(usually in the form of curriculum frameworks) that call for all high school students to be exposed to aspects of math content previously limited to students who enrolled in the college track: algebra, geometry, analytic functions, statistics, probability, discrete mathematics, and even certain aspects of calculus. Theoretically at least (because few states are very far along in the development process), student progress will be measured with new state performance-based instruments that are scored against benchmarks reflecting world-class achievement levels. The purpose of all this reform activity—whether it applies to the classroom or the workplace—is to raise the expectations for educational and training performance well above the basic-skills or minimum-competence emphasis that has been considered an acceptable outcome in the past.

Among the eight states in this study, Oregon represents the clearest example of a state that is moving toward development of high standards—in the sense of benchmarks—for all students in both academic and work-related outcomes. When they are fully established, Oregon's Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) are intended to certify that the holder of the credentials is fully prepared for a next stage—the upper division of high school, postsecondary education, further work-related training, or an entry-level job—within a broadly defined career path. (The characteristics and status of Oregon's CIM and CAM are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.) Other states have begun to think along similar lines, but none has begun development work, except for Wisconsin, whose Gateway Assessment displays similarities to the CIM, and Maine, which has established an active CIM development task force and whose existing Gateway Assessment is explicitly positioned as a CIM precursor.

Defining Industry Norms

Another meaning of "standards" has to do with defining, regulating, or standardizing something so that all users are operating from the same set of assumptions about basic requirements. This interpretation is embodied in the DOL Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT) standards, which articulate specific skills and knowledge defining what a novice in an apprenticeable trade must learn to earn journeyman status in that trade. The "statewide system of core standards and measures of performance" that states were required to develop under the 1990 amendments to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act serves a similar purpose at the programmatic level. The Act requires states to define high-quality standards for vocational programs and to ensure that local programs meet the standards. In developing their Perkins standards, many states pooled their resources through groups such as the Vocational-Technical Consortium of the States (V-TECS) to develop program and occupationally specific standards.[1] Not surprisingly, the states' practice of using V-TECS has generated considerable comparability in Perkins standards across states. STWOA also acknowledges the importance of this aspect of standards through its emphasis on skill certificates that are "portable" and "industry-based" and will thus have meaning to employers throughout a state, region, or the nation.

It is this meaning, standards as normative definitions, that dominates current thinking about standards among school-to-work leaders in most of the eight states. Wisconsin, for example, has developed occupational standards in 12 fields for its youth apprenticeship program. The state plans to adapt or modify these standards—which are essentially lists of skills—for other school-to-work transition pathways such as cooperative education, internships, and JTPA training. This intention suggests that expectations for student outcomes will vary, perhaps depending on the intensity of the student's workplace experience. Students in JTPA programs, for example, might achieve some but not all of the skills required for an industry skill certificate. This interpretation embodies a different conception of standards from that represented by the CIM and CAM in Oregon.

Measuring Performance, Not Time

A further implication of a shift to a standards-based education and training system could create real

[1] V-TECS has developed worker-validated tasks and performance objectives for more than 170 occupational domains, according to a recent study by the Institute for Educational Leadership. See *An Overview of Skill Standards Systems in Education and Industry* (Wills, n.d.).

upheaval in traditional ways of doing business. Most of the eight states talk about academic and skill standards in terms of what students should know and be able to do. "Able to do" suggests that performance, not time put in, will become a key determinant of the end-point credential, whether diploma or skills certificate. The major shift that this notion represents is an explicit principle of reform efforts in some states and a logical but, so far, only implicit outcome of planned changes in others. In all cases, the far-reaching implications of what performance-based measurements might mean for the system are not yet fully understood. The situation is made more complex in some states where terms such as "outcomes-based" and "performance-based" have acquired loaded political meanings that could threaten continued progress toward standards-based systems.

Standards Development Activities in the Eight States

In the eight states, people are aware of the standards-related language and ideas in STWOA and Goals 2000. These states are progressing cautiously in the development of skill standards for several reasons. The states that have received only a Development Grant (four states) are dedicating their time and energies to the creation of the school-based, work-based, and connecting activities required by STWOA to obtain an Implementation Grant. Although the Implementation Grant requires states to "identify the process" that will be used to certify that students have achieved mastery of certain skill levels, the four states that have received these grants appear to be relying on existing certifications while they wait for the National Skill Standards Board to form and conduct its work.

Table 3 summarizes the current status of the eight states' progress in developing skill standards. As this table shows, most states have identified committees that will begin or continue the standards-development process. States that had begun to develop skill standards for youth apprenticeship have continued this process, but this activity is not necessarily integrated with other parts of a broader school-to-work transition vision or with any standards-setting activities in academic domains.

Analysis across the eight states indicates that most are thinking that standards will point toward progressive stages of skill achievement on the way to ultimate mastery. In this way, they are similar. However, the states' conceptions of standards differ widely in terms of how specifically skills are defined, as discussed in the next section.

Tiered Systems of Standards

Among the eight states, people are conceptualizing standards in terms of a tiered system for measuring students' accomplishments over a period of years. For example, Oregon has adopted the two-tiered approach of CIM and CAM described in the report *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!* (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990). The CIM—piloted in a few school districts in 1993 and 1994—requires students to demonstrate proficiency in 11 outcome areas called Foundation Skills and Core Applications for Living. Most students would be expected to earn this credential by about age 16. They would then choose a career pathway, pursuing a program of studies and nonschool-based experiences leading to the CAM. The specific standards associated with the CAM are not yet developed, but the intention is that it, too, will be performance based and that all students will be held to high performance expectations. As Table 3 notes, other states are exploring the idea of adopting a similar approach in the context of their own systemic reform efforts. For example, Wisconsin's planned Gateway Assessment, to be administered in 10th grade, will serve a purpose similar to the CIM.

Oregon's conception of standards and credentials is being developed in the context of broad educational-reform goals and therefore is different from that of the standards-setting activities of school-to-work initiatives in most other states. However, even where the activities are more narrowly focused on occupational-skill standards, states tend to think in terms of tiered levels of attainment pegged more or less to age, grade, or the amount and nature of work experience. Thus, for example, in Maine (where skill standards-related activity is currently tied almost exclusively to youth apprenticeship), craft committees have developed competency profiles that students add to as they progress through

youth apprenticeship. The four levels identified in the profiles are:

- Primary duties

  Competencies that are applicable to all youth apprentices and are identified in Maine's Common Core of Learning.

- Cluster skills/duties

  Competencies that are applicable to all youth apprentices within a specific program cluster (e.g., banking and finance, metals industries).

- Position duties

  Competencies that are applicable to a specific position within a program cluster (e.g., loan processor).

- Agency duties

  These include skills that a youth apprentice might learn in addition to cluster or position duties. For example, a youth apprentice might have learned skills in the machine-tool cluster but also have been involved with accounting or shipping and learned specific skills in these areas.

Maine's youth apprentices receive a Certificate of Skill Mastery if the educational institution and the employing agency certify that the student has (1) engaged in all the education and training experiences required and (2) mastered the core duties and tasks of the relevant standards to an acceptable proficiency. Eventually, the state envisions a Certificate of Skill Mastery for all students involved in school-to-work transition.

Wisconsin's development of skill standards has also revolved around youth apprenticeship. The state's emerging system of standards for certifying apprentices is occupationally based and involves three levels of proficiency for each standard: (1) exposure to a concept with no hands-on experiences; (2) limited skills, requiring instruction and close supervision; and (3) moderately skilled and able to complete a job with limited supervision. To earn certification within an apprenticeable industry, students must experience Level 1 exposure to all of the identified industry standards and Level 2 competence for most standards. Thus, for example, in the graphic arts/printing industry, to be eligible for the certificate in Electronic Imaging/Publishing, the youth apprentice must have been introduced to 29 competencies (including 6 that are defined as "career success traits") and must be rated at Level 2 or higher in 25 of them. One option under consideration is to base the standards and certificates on progressively higher skill levels obtained through progressively more intensive work-based learning experiences.

In Michigan, the development of skill standards is premised on a tiered system that extends beyond high school. State school-to-work leaders are aiming for a system with three levels. At Level 1, students would receive an endorsed high school diploma signifying achievement of basic employability skills. Level 2 would certify an intermediate level of accomplishment that is a step beyond basic employability. Level 3 would be a full certification addressing specific readiness to undertake a job and would be overseen either exclusively by industry or cooperatively by industry and the schools.

The tendency among these states to build tiers or levels into their standards and certification processes is, as far as we know, not based on any collaboration among the states or outside guidance. Instead, it seems to have arisen as a result of the states' analyses of successful approaches for working with adolescents. Acknowledging that school-to-work opportunities are appropriate for all students, state planners understand that they are nevertheless especially appealing to students who are not motivated by learning for learning's sake alone or for simply earning a grade. Most students stay better focused when achievable, short-term goals are established along the way to a longer-term objective. The systems of standards and certifications that the states are planning or developing seem to be appropriately designed to recognize intermediate outcomes along the way to overall mastery.

Level of Specificity in States' Standards

Although many of the states in this study have plans for tiered systems of standards and certifications, they differ in the degree of specificity to be found in the formulations and documents currently developed or under development. Some are thinking about standards that cover broad domains, whereas others are proceeding (or plan to proceed)

TABLE 3: Status of States' Skill Standards Development

Standards Activity	California	Iowa	Maine	Michigan	Oregon	Pennsylvania	West Virginia	Wisconsin
State-identified skill clusters			19 cluster areas		6 endorsement areas for the CAM	10 career clusters	13 Tech Prep career clusters	14 career clusters for all students
State-sponsored skill standards developed			15 first-cut standards for youth apprenticeship		Under development in pilot sites			12 skill standards in 9 occupations for youth apprenticeship
10th grade Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM)	Planned		Planned	Planned	1/95: Schools submit plan for CIM implementation		Planned	10th grade Gateway Assessment scheduled to be complete in 1997-98
Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM)	Planned		Being considered for youth apprentices completing 13th year		1/96: Districts submit CAM implementation plan			
State-appointed skill standards committee		Guidance team and stakeholder group responsible	Craft Committees developed 15 skill standards	Governor's Council of Employers for school-to-work will be established	Workforce Quality Council oversees education reform process	Governor appointed Committee on Education Standards and Assessment	Standards Committee appointed	Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Committee responsible for youth apprenticeship skill standards
Skill standards projects exist but not state sponsored	Far West Lab—Health; Business Roundtable—Finance and Communications; Printing							
Skill standards being used by states		State vocational education requirements	State-developed standards for youth apprenticeship	DOL/BAT; V-TECS			DOL/BAT; Tech Prep	State-developed skill standards for youth apprenticeship

Notes: *Shading in column indicates that the state received a School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) Implementation Grant in the first wave of such awards (July 1994).*

V-TECS = Vocational-Technical Consortium of the States

DOL/BAT = U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training

Council of Chief State School Officers, Resource Center on Educational Equity, Washington, DC, 1995.

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industry by industry or even occupation by occupation. A comparison of the approaches in Oregon and Wisconsin—two states actively engaged in standards setting—illustrates this distinction between broadly framed sets of expected outcomes for students versus mastery of industry-specific tasks.

Standards as Broadly Framed Outcomes. As noted previously, Oregon is in the early stages of developing and operationalizing its CAM—the credential that may one day replace the high school diploma as the endpoint of the state's K–12 education system. (The CIM has been piloted, and all schools in the state will submit CIM implementation plans in early 1995.) For the CAM, the intent is that, beginning in about 11th grade, students will select a career-oriented focus for their remaining years in high school. Each student's focus will be in one of six career clusters, or "endorsement areas." According to state officials, the endorsement areas cover 85 percent of Oregon's overall labor market. The six areas are:

- *Arts and Communication*

  Programs of study are related to the humanities and to the performing, visual, literary, and media arts. These may include architecture, creative writing, film and cinema studies, fine arts, graphic design and production, journalism, foreign languages, radio and television broadcasting, advertising, and public relations.

- *Business and Management*

  Programs of study are related to the business environment. These may include entrepreneurship, sales, marketing, hospitality and tourism, computer/information systems, finance, accounting, personnel, economics, and management.

- *Health Services*

  Programs of study are related to the treatment of injuries, conditions, and diseases. These may include medicine, dentistry, nursing, therapy and rehabilitation, nutrition, fitness, and hygiene.

- *Human Resources*

  Programs of study are related to economic, political, and social systems. These may include education, law and legal studies, law enforcement, public administration, child and family services, religion, and social services.

- *Industrial and Engineering Systems*

  Programs of study are related to technologies necessary to design, develop, install, or maintain physical systems. These may include engineering and related technologies, mechanics and repair, manufacturing technology, precision production, and construction.

- *Natural Resource Systems*

  Programs of study are related to the environment and natural resources. These may include agriculture, earth sciences, environmental sciences, fisheries management, forestry, horticulture, and wildlife management.

Clearly, these endorsement areas and the programs of study within them encompass a wide range of possible careers and jobs. For example, the nursing program must accommodate students whose career goals range from nursing aide to registered nurse or physician's assistant. The nursing program also needs to be aligned with other health-service career programs, enabling a student to redirect his or her preparation as the student's interests change (e.g., to the practice of medicine as a physician). Nevertheless, Oregon's intent is to define high-performance standards for each program, which will apply to all enrolled students. Standards in the endorsement areas are being drafted and tested by 10 CAM pilot sites funded by the state. The state intends to draw on these local efforts to develop statewide parameters for the standards.

The stakes assigned to achieving the standards and earning a CAM, however, remain unclear. "What the standards mean for students is still up in the air," according to a state Tech Prep official. "We need to develop a curriculum progression with a core of instruction on the outcomes and leading up to specific technical needs of a job."

Another state respondent said that "one of the challenges will be to develop performance appraisal criteria for work-based learning experiences that will complement the assessment of school-based learning experiences and result in a comprehensive view of each student's level of mastery of the CAM outcomes."

Oregon's approach to defining career pathways and developing common standards for all students is a bold, innovative undertaking. Clearly, the state faces large challenges if it is to meet its goal of a fully operational CAM system by 1997–98. Other states in the study will watch what is happening there carefully for its applicability to their situations. In interviews, officials in California, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia all indicated interest in Oregon's system and in eventually adopting a similar strategy.

Mastery of Industry-Specific Tasks. In contrast to the Oregon strategy of developing broadly framed career clusters and programs, Wisconsin school-to-work transition officials see the primary goal of skill standards as establishing industry-guided and -approved competency levels, with curriculum that outlines the teaching strategies necessary to assist students in achieving these levels. Wisconsin's director of the Office of Workforce Excellence stated, "The standards need to be specific when you have a strong work-based component because employers expect and want specificity."

Wisconsin has developed skill standards in 12 occupational areas associated with its youth apprenticeship initiative. The Wisconsin Office of Workforce Excellence determines the occupations for which to develop standards, based on an established information-gathering and review process involving this office's staff, an interagency development team, and an industry group. Each group marshals evidence on the need and support for youth apprenticeship in a particular occupational area and prepares a proposal to develop standards and curriculum to the state's Youth Apprenticeship Advisory Council, which has the authority to approve or disapprove further development work. The standards—also referred to as *competencies*—are primarily lists of industry-specific tasks that students must master. A few tasks clearly draw on skills that are learned and practiced in school—for example, estimating job costs based on a price list—but the standards do not draw direct links between school-based and work-based learning. For the most part, Wisconsin's skill standards are framed as discrete, industry-specific, hands-on tasks that a student can demonstrate and be rated on for competence, with the skills then checked off on a list. Examples from the "Introduction to the Printing Industry" standards include the following:

- Produce sheetwise imposition paste-up
- Produce metal offset plates
- Operate a power cutter
- Determine correct substrate

Need for Clarification About Defining Standards. This comparison of conceptions of standards and the standards-setting process in Oregon and Wisconsin highlights what seem to be some fairly wide differences in how the states are proceeding in this aspect of their efforts to develop school-to-work transition systems. Although we do not yet have examples of program-level standards that will apply to Oregon's endorsement areas, the fact that the primary development work for the CAM is based in local educational organizations rather than state-level agencies or industry-based groups (although it is being guided by the state education department) suggests that, when the standards do emerge, they will differ significantly from Wisconsin's skill standards. In addition, Oregon intends for its standards to make direct links between academic learning and skills needed on the job. Because Oregon's programs are so broadly defined, the standards associated with them will also have to be broad and encompassing rather than lists of job-specific tasks or competencies.

It is unclear whether one or the other of these conceptions of standards for a school-to-work transition system is more reflective of the vision embodied in STWOA and Goals 2000. Currently, the states in this study are thinking about skill standards in ways similar to the Wisconsin approach—discrete, industry-specific, hands-on tasks to be mastered by the student. Michigan and Pennsylvania are using competency-based V-TECS guidelines, for example. Other states and localities within the states rely on BAT skill standards and the American College Testing Program's Work Keys project, which is designed to help employers, educators, and trainers identify entry-level skills for specific jobs.

In the longer term, however, many of the states seem inclined to move toward the more integrated types of credentials represented by Oregon's CIM and CAM development efforts—credentials that

certify a young person's academic and skill readiness for a job or further education and training. Among their other attributes, such standards could be more easily raised over time, as benchmarks were set at progressively higher performance levels. The states would welcome federal clarification on the design of skill standards, because it remains unclear how the work of the National Skill Standards Board will inform state standard-setting. It seems likely that the characteristics of any standards adopted will have an effect on other aspects of implementing a school-to-work transition system—for example, the ability to serve all students and the likelihood of gaining widespread parental acceptance and support for the work-based part of school-to-work transition. More broadly framed standards suggest that students' post-high school options are open. On the other hand, for many students, a credential demonstrating their competence to perform a specific entry-level job in a growth industry with career potential is the exact outcome desired.

State-Level Issues in the Development and Acceptance of Skill Standards

Debate and controversy currently mark the movement toward a standards-based system—whether for the classroom or the workplace. As indicated in Chapter 2, in our discussion about communicating a vision, there are many stakeholders and just as many ways of understanding (or misunderstanding) the goals of a school-to-work system. From the perspective of implementing standards, three key constituencies—business and industry, postsecondary institutions, and parents and the public—each hold distinct views. Another major issue is standards-development costs, which can be substantial.

Role of Business and Industry in Standards Development

All but one of the eight states in this study have established or plan to form committees or commissions to oversee the development of standards, and in each case business and industry are represented. However, the centrality of business and industry to the standards-setting process varies from state to state (or locality to locality in states where the action is largely at the local level). In Maine and Wisconsin, where the principal program-development focus has been on youth apprenticeship, business and industry have been extensively engaged in establishing and endorsing technical skill standards. The same has been true in Pennsylvania, where the York and Lancaster youth-apprenticeship programs have worked closely with the standards-development efforts of the National Metalworking Project. In California, where the state has not yet become active in setting skill standards, the Business Roundtable and the California Department of Education have invested $500,000 to develop functional skill standards for the telecommunications and finance industries. The West Virginia Business Roundtable sponsors the West Virginia Business and Education Alliance's Student Skills Project, which is working with state government and state and local educators to develop skill standards that will support the state's school-to-work transition system.

As important as involvement of business and industry in standards setting may be, uniform acceptance of the standards-setting effort by the relevant sector is another issue entirely. For example, Wisconsin has relied heavily on industry associations as a resource—both financial and informational—in its development of skill standards. According to the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce Association, however, relatively few employers have embraced the skill standards or adopted them in their hiring practices. The Association indicated that only those employers who employ youth apprentices even know about the skill standards. The California Business Roundtable has tried to forestall this problem by including the state's major financial institutions in the development of the finance industry standards, with the expectation that these institutions will then use the standards. It remains to be seen whether this strategy will be successful.

We may conclude from these experiences that the private sector does not have a uniform expectation of the skills needed by entry-level workers. Some employers indicate that they do not expect or need entry-level workers to have obtained technical skills, but instead want individuals who have acquired the types of skills identified by the SCANS

Commission:[4] basic skills such as reading, writing, math, and communicating; thinking skills including the ability to learn, reason, make decisions, and problem solve; and personal qualities such as a sense of responsibility and integrity. Other employers, especially those in technical industries that are experiencing difficulty in recruiting workers with basic technical skills, are advising states to develop standards that will certify levels of technical-skill competence. States will likely need to embark on a marketing campaign to sell industry on the state standards and to encourage businesses to adopt skill standards as hiring criteria.

Acceptance of Skill Certificates and Applied Academics by Postsecondary Institutions

The attitude of postsecondary institutions toward acceptance of applied academics in classrooms and work-based experiences has been an issue for youth-apprenticeship programs, and will continue to be an issue in many states as their school-to-work systems unfold. Except in Maine, no postsecondary institutions in any of the eight states accepts a skill certificate alone as an admissions credential. If and when school-to-work transition systems become fully developed, however, the position of higher education will almost inevitably need to change. We have some evidence that this change is occurring already, as we discuss in Chapter 5.

Clearly, the importance of postsecondary institutions' acceptance of applied academics and competency-based performance measures cannot be overestimated. Several state officials emphasized that the four-year institutions drive K–12 education and particularly the high school program. These individuals believe that, if postsecondary institutions endorse and accept competency-based course credits, then the secondary system will move more rapidly toward adopting those teaching approaches and thus embrace one of the fundamentals of the school-to-work transition system.

Acceptance by Parents, the Public, and Teachers

As noted in Chapter 2, many states have experienced well-publicized and vehement reaction to the idea of Outcomes-Based Education in the academic areas of the curriculum. Terms such as *performance-based* and *competencies* are now interpreted by some citizens and parents as synonyms for Outcomes-Based Education. In California, for example, the governor's recent veto of the California Learning Assessment System legislation was reportedly based on the concern that it was a performance-based assessment of 10th graders that, according to its opponents, failed to test basic skills and report individual scores. So far, we have found no indication of opposition to performance-based measures or competencies in the work-based components of school-to-work development efforts; but the classroom-based portions of programs will likely be affected by the general opposition to standards and performance assessments. In Iowa, where a recent effort to legislate statewide outcomes-based academics was derailed by grassroots opposition, school-to-work leaders report that they are proceeding slowly and carefully, taking time to educate as many people as possible about the concept of school-to-work transition, including the role of skill standards.

Teachers are another important constituency to be considered in promoting the acceptance of skill standards. If the standards-setting process is occurring primarily at the state level or in industry-based groups, most classroom teachers will have had little exposure to what standards mean for classroom practice until a mandate for implementation comes along. Teachers will find that standards are not a curriculum detailing what they should do in the classroom. All states in the study plan to rely on teachers in local school districts to draft the curriculums that will operationalize instruction consistent with skill standards; the arrangement is slightly different in Wisconsin, where teachers are serving on state-level teams that are developing curriculum. Although this approach may slow down the implementation process, it allows for local district flexibility, which is an important factor in most of the states. In addition, though it may seem inefficient to reinvent the wheel many times over, local engagement in curriculum development may help create acceptance and understanding of the changes embodied in the use of skill standards.

[4] These skills were identified in the report by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS, 1991).

Issues Regarding Development Cost and Access to Other State Efforts

The cost of developing skill standards is significant. Wisconsin is spending $25,000 to $40,000 per occupation to develop skill standards. As noted earlier, California's efforts in developing two sets of standards for two industries cost $500,000. States are interested in obtaining and learning from standards developed by other states and adapting them to their own situations, viewing such information sharing as an important role the federal government should assume but so far has not.

Further, standards development is a continuous process. Standards must be kept current as industries restructure, adopt new equipment or procedures, and make other changes. Most states have not addressed how they will update the standards that they establish. Although Wisconsin has a two-year review process in place, one printing firm has complained that the state's printing/graphic arts standards are already outdated. The rapidly changing workplace will demand continuous updating and revalidating of skill standards, steps that states need to address.

This issue is directly related to a theme that states mentioned repeatedly regarding the need for leadership from the yet-to-be established National Skill Standard Board. School-to-work transition leaders in many states believe that a large investment in developing state-based standards is inefficient and even counterproductive if model standards will emerge from the National Skill Standards Board's work. This view, however, is not universal. A representative of the California Business Roundtable asserted that the board's role should be to endorse standards developed by industry/state groups—not to develop standards. He said that business would reject any other approach.

CHAPTER FIVE
Student Access to Transition Opportunities

The creation of statewide school-to-work transition systems that make transition opportunities available to all students is a major challenge in any state. Among the complicating factors is that the secondary education system has historically separated students into three categories—general, vocational, and college bound—and has established different types of opportunities and expectations for students in each category. By contrast, the requirements of STWOA and current trends in education reform urge states and local education agencies to provide consistent opportunities for all students and to raise their expectations for disadvantaged youth, in particular. These developments are causing states to rethink their service-delivery strategies for students who have not fit easily into earlier formats for vocational and employment-related training.

In their Development Grant applications and in interviews, all eight states indicated that their school-to-work transition systems are intended to serve all students. In fact, many states emphasized the word "all" in their grant applications. However, serving all students is a goal that has not yet been translated into specific policies and practices in any of the states studied. Indeed, the foundation on which a state is building its school-to-work transition system appears to have a direct effect on the population(s) targeted to access the system. For example, Oregon, which is approaching school-to-work transition primarily through the implementation of CIM and CAM, is using learning strategies that include instruction in applying problem-solving skills and greater integration across subject areas in the context of both school- and work-based learning to achieve the outcomes required to obtain certification. Because work-based learning experiences are central to the overall education reform strategy, Oregon's school-to-work initiative is intended eventually to involve all students in the state.

In states that are emphasizing the work-force-development goal in their school-to-work systems, those students who are unlikely to pursue a postsecondary experience are the ones whom the emerging school-to-work transition systems target most directly. Though college-bound students may be included in these states' offerings, it is assumed that their needs are already being addressed through existing opportunities and are not of central importance to the school-to-work system.

This chapter describes state strategies to open school-to-work opportunities to all students, including approaches intended to help create opportunities for disadvantaged students. States' efforts to ensure postsecondary institutions' acceptance of credit obtained through school-to-work transition opportunities and advanced placement credits are also discussed, as is the overall effect that program design may have on student participation. Because states are in the early stages of developing and implementing their school-to-work transition systems, the strategies described are mainly plans that are either envisioned or being piloted.

Strategies to Open School-to-Work Opportunities to All Students

In the eight states included in the study, the state-level initiatives most frequently implemented to ensure that school-to-work opportunities are available for all students are (1) RFP provisions that require local partnerships to describe how the local school-to-work transition system will serve all students; (2) high-quality career information; and (3) high-quality career counseling.

RFP Provisions Ensuring Service Access

The primary strategy used by the eight states to promote the expectation that all students will have access to school-to-work transition opportunities is the inclusion of special provisions in their RFPs for the award of school-to-work grants to local partnerships. For example, Wisconsin's RFP for local implementation grants requires a "benchmark worksheet" that includes the number and percentage of students actually involved in activities such as job shadowing, 11th-grade students with written career plans and career majors, 9th- through 12th-graders enrolled in integrated academic and occupational courses, and students enrolled in Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship and other paid or

unpaid work experience. The local partnership must also project the percentage increase in students participating in each of these activities over the next five years. This requirement has a dual purpose—to encourage local grantees to increase the number of participating students at a steady rate and, through a focus on increasing numbers, to extend school-to-work transition opportunities to students who, under less favorable circumstances, might not have the opportunity to participate. Addressing the latter priority more directly, the Wisconsin RFP also requires applicants to provide a narrative description of their strategy and timetable for providing opportunities for disadvantaged students to participate in school-to-work programs; the types of disadvantages that the local narratives must address include low achievement, dropout status, disability, limited English proficiency, and migrant status.

Establishment of High-Quality Career Information Systems

Providing high-quality career information to students at an early age is widely viewed as a valuable strategy for extending school-to-work transition opportunities to students who might otherwise be excluded. The rationale for the strategy is that, if students are knowledgeable about various careers and the academic and technical skills they require, then they will be better able to make informed choices as they select and enroll in high-school and college courses. Moreover, career information that is available to all youth helps, in particular, to improve opportunities for students whose families lack career networks that could provide this information informally or whose families' networks are limited or narrow in scope.

For many years, the education community has been criticized for not providing students with even basic information on the academic and technical courses that desirable careers require; instead, schools tend to focus almost exclusively on college entrance requirements. It is also sometimes claimed that minority students are the most likely to miss out on the necessary information to make informed choices, resulting in students' entering the 11th grade without the prerequisite courses necessary to pursue their desired career pathways.

We've found that all of the states in our sample have developed statewide career-information systems that appear to be successful and responsive to the requirements of the emerging school-to-work transition systems; three of the state systems are described here. The Michigan Occupational Information System is intended to support lifelong career development by providing a computerized package of career guidance and development information. This system employs a user-friendly interface that allows users to explore a variety of career alternatives selected according to the user's skills or interests. Originally funded through federal and state resources, the system has recently experienced a significant reduction in state funding. These cuts have required that the information system be marketed independently, to augment its budget through subscriptions from entities such as schools or libraries that house the system. Ironically, as a result of the marketing effort, the system has become much more visible and is now supported by growing numbers of customers who are aware of the career information it provides. In fact, according to Michigan Occupational Information System officials, K–12 school districts make up 73 percent of the network's customers, and a significant segment of the state's high school population now has access to information stored in the system.

Maine also relies heavily on its career-information system. The Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee uses the system to disseminate information on a number of different occupations. In fact, expecting the state to be allotted more Implementation Grant funds than were actually received, the committee had planned to use STWOA funds to launch an information network—Choices—that would inform students and job seekers about various career pathways. This system would have included an online interest inventory, a module to assist users in identifying their transferrable skills and preparing a work history, and lists of educational and training institutions able to provide specialized training and education in career areas. In addition, the state had planned to use the system to administer an automated labor-market and occupational-information system based on the assignment of occupational codes to the Social Security numbers used in the

state's quarterly unemployment-insurance reporting system. The effort was to be supported through the adoption of Social Security numbers as universal student identifiers throughout Maine's educational institutions. Maine had also planned to implement a Universal Student Information System that would have helped to track the movement of students through the education system into the labor market. Maine is currently seeking other sources of funding to make these systems operational.

The third state, Wisconsin, plans to make career information available to all students through expansion of the Wisconsin Career Information System, which is the primary statewide mechanism available to communicate career and labor-market information to students. The Wisconsin Career Information System is automated, with customers across the state in 350 sites, primarily in public schools.

Enhancement of Career Counseling and Guidance

Career counseling is another strategy that states use (or plan to use) to involve students in school-to-work programming who may not have good sources of career advice available through their personal network of family and friends. Many of the states indicated that, under present conditions, guidance counselors have caseloads of up to 500 students and that providing one-to-one career counseling is therefore next to impossible. To address these concerns, some states are infusing career counseling into the curriculum as a strategy to provide career advice to all students. Another approach is to create career counseling centers.

Guidance-Related Curriculums. Wisconsin requires local school districts to implement the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model, which takes "a PreK–12 perspective to developmental guidance." The model is a "framework that integrates multiple guidance services provided by school-based counselors, other school staff, parents, business and industry representatives, and community members," although, according to the staff person who oversees statewide implementation, at present guidance counselors are virtually the only providers of services called for by the model's design. Although the model was created to provide services to all students, guidance counselors by themselves may not be able to reach all students without the assistance of the other intended providers. To supplement this guidance model, Wisconsin is implementing the recommendations of the state's K–12 Guidance and Counseling Implementation Panel. These recommendations are based on the results of focus groups of students and parents convened around the state. The Panel's recommendations are intended to meet the career-guidance needs of all Wisconsin students and include systematic career-awareness activities beginning in the middle school years; hands-on career exploration through structured job shadowing in the late middle school years, continuing into the 9th and 10th grades; and development of an individualized career plan for each student.

Oregon is a good example of a state that eventually plans to use curriculum to provide career exploration to all students, with a special focus on younger students. At present, students in schools that are pilot-testing the CAM are also being exposed to career information based on the six occupational clusters. The state's Implementation Grant says that opportunities for career exploration by younger students are planned at the elementary and middle school levels to introduce students to the world of work, but these plans have not yet been implemented, according to our research.

In a similar approach, *The Maine Guide: A Developmental Framework for Life Choices* offers career-awareness curricular activities for all students in grades K–12 based on the state's comprehensive guidance model for school counselors. Maine is also planning for the development of individualized career plans for all students.

Career Centers. Wisconsin has enacted legislation that authorizes and funds the development of youth career centers based on the German model. At the time of our visit, the state had funded four community career centers through a competitive application process, and expects eventually to support enough centers to deliver career and guidance counseling services to all students in the state. The community-based centers target services to students in the 8th and 10th grades, which are seen in the state as key career decision-making points.

Although each center is unique, all centers employ a career-development strategy that guides students through a series of self-learning steps, which include awareness, assessment, exploration, selection, and application. The four currently operating centers are as follows:

- The Northwest Career Counseling Network in rural Ashland links nine school districts within a 11,000 square-mile area using fiber optics and distance learning.
- Located in a shopping mall, the Fox Valley Career Exploration Center uses technology to create an arcade of career information. To encourage maximum use of its services, it offers evening and Saturday hours.
- The West Bend CareerNet links area schools, Job Service, and business sites via a bulletin board, and provides an electronic library of career planning information.
- Operated by the local Private Industry Council, the Milwaukee Center exposes eighth-graders to the center's resources and its technology-based services, with the hope that they and their families will return on a regular basis to learn about career and educational opportunities.

Targeted Strategies for Serving Disadvantaged Students

The states in this study understand that meeting the needs of economically and academically disadvantaged students requires approaches that seek these youth out and provide them with multiple forms of additional support.

Use of Existing Categorical Resources

In their STWOA grant applications, most of the eight states identified and proposed to integrate into their school-to-work transition systems a variety of existing targeted programs that serve disadvantaged students. Michigan, for example, said in its Development Grant proposal that it would use individualized tools—such as Educational Employability Development Plans and student portfolios—to reach disadvantaged youth early in their educational experience and to make them aware of career opportunities. In addition to approaches such as this, the states are also using Jobs for America's Graduates and JTPA 8 percent set-aside funds to provide targeted support to disadvantaged students.

Jobs for America's Graduates. Maine and Pennsylvania are using their states' versions of Jobs for America's Graduates to reach out to disadvantaged populations. Maine is using a portion of its Implementation Grant to fund Jobs for Maine's Graduates, which is already operating in 25 sites around the state. With STWOA funds, the state is pilot-testing a new work-based learning program, as well as a new "safety net" program, Project Reach, which will serve seventh and eighth graders.

The California Partnership Academies. The academies have been established in school districts throughout the state where local businesses have expressed an interest in forming a collaborative relationship. The relationship addresses the needs of educationally disadvantaged youth and the limited-English-proficient population, and shares common goals of lessening the numbers of students who are at risk of becoming unemployed as well as school dropouts. The academies are designed to provide:

- Curriculum that connects academic content and thinking skills with the vocational core, career guidance and exploration, leadership skills, and employability skills.
- Small classes, individual attention, and careful monitoring of student performance and attendance by teachers who have expressed a desire to work with these students.
- Extensive use of computers as a teaching/learning tool in all subject areas.
- Counseling services for at-risk students from a special guidance advisor who provides a full range of support services, including agency referrals.
- Firsthand exposure to career information through field trips, guest speakers, and a mentor program; in the latter, each student is matched to a local industry volunteer mentor who is committed to spending two to four hours per month with the student.

- Opportunities for meaningful jobs through paid summer employment and work experiences in students' senior year.

JTPA 8 Percent Funds. Some states have turned to JTPA 8 percent Education Coordination funds to address the needs of at-risk students through school-to-work transition activities. West Virginia expects to use its 8 percent state set-aside funds to support youth apprenticeship and to pilot additional school-to-work transition opportunities for disadvantaged students in the state. The West Virginia Job Training Programs Division of the Bureau of Employment Training has piloted similar programs. For instance, Charleston has a pilot program for 10th through 12th graders who have fallen behind in school but are interested in careers in the retail or health-care industries. The program has a mentoring component, with financial incentives for regular student attendance. Students also learn personal budgeting and other life skills. So far, participants in the Charleston program have had nearly perfect attendance, on average have maintained a 3.0 grade point average, and have experienced lower rates of teen pregnancies than have other groups of similar youth.

By actions of the state legislature, Oregon targets its 8 percent funds on school-to-work transition and also provides a state match for these dollars. In Michigan, the 8 percent funds support a school-to-work staff person at the state level; and at the local level, these funds are used to expand the overall resources available for school-to-work transition.

Targeted Support for Local Partnerships in Economically Depressed Areas

Local Examples of Support for Depressed Urban Areas. Milwaukee is a good example of a city that is building a school-to-work transition system to reach all of its students. In 1993, the Milwaukee Public Schools began a major education reform effort based on the principles of successful school-to-work transition. The district had found itself faced with a 17-percent dropout rate for the 1992–93 school year, a mobility rate of 39 percent, and 79 percent of its minority students needing remediation in math and 66 percent requiring remediation in reading. In January 1993, the Milwaukee superintendent convened a School-to-Work Transition Task Force to study the school-to-work concept and how it could be applied in Milwaukee. The Board of School Directors approved the task force's recommendations the following year. "School-to-work [transition]...is a process to change the way teachers teach and the way students learn, so students can better see the connection between what goes on in the classroom and how it relates to the world of work," according to the task force's report. Milwaukee plans to provide every student with a combination of school- and work-based learning, a rigorous integrated studies curriculum with real-world applications, career counseling, and work experiences. Ten schools—three elementary, four middle, and three high schools—have begun the change process during the 1994–95 school year. The goal is for 40 additional schools to begin the process of reform in the 1995–96 school year, with 100 schools added in the 1996–97 school year. Milwaukee was slated to receive $1.2 million from Wisconsin's Implementation Grant and state general revenue funds in its first year of implementation, 1994–95.

In Oregon, Roosevelt Renaissance 2000, located at Roosevelt High School in Portland, embodies another approach to reaching a distressed urban area. Roosevelt High School was faced with a situation similar to Milwaukee's, with the highest absenteeism, dropout, and expulsion rates in the city's school system. In response, educators, parents, and the business community jointly created a program intended to provide students with the education and skills necessary to succeed in the job market that they anticipate will exist in the 21st century. Important facets of Roosevelt Renaissance are identifying projected areas of economic growth and helping students investigate career opportunities in those areas. The program helps students develop these skills in the classroom and through on-the-job projects. In fact, all Roosevelt students will participate in a school-supervised work experience sometime during their high school years. Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery will certify that students have achieved the necessary skills.

Support for Rural Areas. Rural areas present states with another set of equally challenging conditions, since many such areas do not have school- or work-based learning experiences readily available to all students. Small school districts may not have the staff capacity to support the development of inte-

grated and applied curriculums. Also, rural areas typically have too few employers supporting careers in too few fields to provide students with an adequate range of work-based opportunities.

To address these multiple challenges, states are planning to use a variety of school- and work-based learning approaches. Some states plan to use telecommunications—such as distance learning, intrastate interactive television programming, and electronic networks—to provide school-based learning to students in rural areas. Other promising strategies include service learning and school-based enterprises.

Maine, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia anticipate that they will need to employ both service learning and school-based enterprises to provide work-related learning experiences for students in rural areas where few work-based opportunities are available. Simulated work-based learning opportunities allow students in rural areas to learn and apply academic and technical training in context, in situations where there are few employers able to offer real work-based learning opportunities. For instance, West Virginia and Michigan will use a school-based youth entrepreneurship training program for high school and community college students. This program, Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (REAL), is now in its third year of operation in more than five West Virginia counties. The classroom training provides students with the opportunity to learn the basics of business start-up and development, including conducting a market analysis, writing a business plan, deciding whether to rent or own, handling customer relations, and learning business and management skills, as well as business ethics. REAL provides students with an opportunity to file for incorporation, secure financing, and actually own and operate their own small business venture. In addition to REAL, West Virginia also plans the extensive use of field trips to provide rural students with a realistic idea of the types of careers that exist in urban areas.

Strategies to Ensure That Students in the School-to-Work System Can Enroll in College

Postsecondary institutions' acceptance of high school credits earned in school-to-work transition courses is an essential step in attracting high-achieving students into career-oriented programming. State and local officials report that parents, in particular, resist their children's involvement in school-to-work opportunities unless they are assured that college enrollment will remain a viable option after high school. In states where postsecondary institutions accept applied academics and competency-based performance measures, the school-to-work system is more likely to be viewed not as another tracking mechanism for noncollege-bound students but as an enhanced learning experience for all students.

States are wrestling with two significant issues related to school-to-work linkages with postsecondary institutions—(1) the acceptance of credits earned through school-to-work transition courses, including applied academics and work-based learning experiences, for purposes of college admission and (2) the acceptance of advanced-placement credits for technical courses taken by high school students. So far, two-year postsecondary institutions have been more willing to work with state and local school-to-work initiatives to resolve these issues than have four-year institutions. In part, this disparity can be attributed to Tech Prep articulation efforts that began under the 1990 Perkins Act initiative to link high school and two-year postsecondary institutions.

Acceptance by Two-year Postsecondary Institutions

In two-year postsecondary institutions, the primary coordination issue is whether the institution will accept credits earned in secondary school courses as applicable toward course requirements of the two-year institution's final degree or credential.

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Two-year colleges in several states insist that courses for postsecondary credit should be taught by postsecondary instructors, thus limiting the types of courses for which graduating seniors can seek advanced-placement credit. The president of the technical college system in one state indicated that it is difficult to award postsecondary credits for courses taken at the secondary level because (1) questions arise regarding the adequacy of the instruction the student received at the secondary level and (2) tuition foregone by the postsecondary institution for each credit awarded for courses taken at the secondary school level reduces the community college's revenues.

The study found several cases, however, of two-year colleges' accepting applied or work-based courses taken in high school for advanced-placement credit. These examples include the following:

- In West Virginia, community colleges accept Tech Prep Associate Degree program credits earned in high school as counting towards the postsecondary credential.
- In Wisconsin, technical colleges accept applied academic courses earned in the state youth-apprenticeship programs in printing and finance (up to 12 credits per student) as counting toward a technical-college credential. More occupational areas will become available for advanced-placement credits as youth apprenticeship expands within the state.

Acceptance by Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Acceptance of credit for applied courses at four-year institutions is more problematic. In these institutions, the issues are (1) acceptability of applied or competency-based courses toward admissions requirements and (2) the award of advanced-placement credits based on courses taken in high school. However, several states in our study have made progress with four-year colleges and universities' accepting course credits obtained through school-to-work learning strategies. They include the following examples:

- Pennsylvania State University and Temple University have agreed to accept applied academic courses to meet college admissions requirements. Pennsylvania school-to-work officials consider this step significant. They anticipate that, by the end of the 1995–96 school year, all 14 universities in the state system will follow suit.
- Wisconsin is field-testing a competency-based admissions program focusing on secondary schools that offer applied academic courses. A Competency-Based Admissions Task Force has created a process through which students may be accepted into four-year postsecondary institutions based on competencies in academic classes, rather than the traditional Carnegie seat-time units. The model will be piloted in eight high schools currently offering applied academic classes. For students who have taken a competency-based course and are applying to a four-year institution, teachers will complete a student profile for the relevant academic area, which the school will submit along with the student's academic transcript. Because each University of Wisconsin campus establishes its own admissions policies, the university will work individually with each of the 13 campus admissions offices to develop appropriate forms and procedures.
- The Oregon Board for Higher Education required the university system to develop proficiency standards for admission to four-year institutions. These requirements are intended to align with the K–12 standards and outcomes now being developed and will ultimately become the basis for college admissions.
- The University of Northern Iowa has agreed to accept Applied Math I and II as the equivalent of Algebra I for admissions purposes. This decision was made after university faculty met and "cracked the curriculum open," as one Iowa respondent told us, to determine what concepts and skills the applied math courses actually taught.

Program Emphases That Skew the System Toward Particular Students

The congressional intent in STWOA was for the creation of systems without labels (e.g., "second chance" programs, programs for "noncollege-

bound" students). The merits of facilitating the transition to high-skill, high-wage careers were expected to be sufficiently appealing to students (and their parents) that students from varied backgrounds would be attracted to the diverse opportunities that would be available. This expectation may ultimately be fulfilled; but in the first months after implementation, the mix of programs that states are incorporating in their school-to-work transition systems is affecting states' ability to make opportunities available to all students.

Youth apprenticeship is a good example of how program options have affected the student populations involved in school-to-work services. Youth-apprenticeship programs have been criticized for serving only the most readily employable noncollege-bound students. The earlier study of the eight states in this study's sample (Reisner et al., 1994) supported this criticism, finding that students involved in state pilot projects were generally "the cream of the crop," according to program administrators. Because employers were making significant financial investments in these students, only those students who program administrators believed were most likely to succeed in the workplace were being selected to participate. This desire to ensure success tended to leave out at-risk youth and other students whose on-the-job success seemed less certain. The study also found that the geographic location of youth apprenticeship pilot projects tended to favor small cities and other places with good opportunities for work-based learning but without ethnically diverse populations.

States that offer youth apprenticeship have attempted to address this type of criticism by providing career information at earlier ages, offering female students opportunities to learn about nontraditional opportunities, and initiating opportunities in urban areas with diverse populations. Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, for example, are taking steps to initiate youth-apprenticeship programs in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and Green Bay. In addition, states are exploring many strategies to extend school-to-work transition opportunities to students in the lowest achievement quartile.

Even so, the core components of the learning experiences in the eight states' school-to-work systems appear most appropriate to those students who have mastered the basic academic skills and who learn best in contextual, applied settings. What tends to be missing in many states' systems are action plans for extending meaningful school-to-work opportunities on a broad scale to academically or economically disadvantaged students and college-bound students.

CHAPTER SIX
Using State Experiences to Inform Federal Actions

As diverse as the experiences of the eight states in our study may be, the elements that are common across their efforts to design and implement school-to-work transition systems can inform federal decision making and actions in important ways. This chapter presents suggestions drawn from our own observations and from the statements of state officials regarding areas in which federal leadership can support and strengthen the growth of state capacities to facilitate successful school-to-work transition. We focus on two types of federal support in particular. The first is technical assistance to the states. The second is further development of federal policy and administrative priorities under STWOA and related authorities.

Technical Assistance Priorities in the Eight States

State staff and others involved in developing and implementing school-to-work transition systems are finding that their work is taking them into areas where they believe their background knowledge and experience to be inadequate. They have expressed their need to know much more about technical issues, as well as examples of effective (and ineffective) practice. The information needs they described to us include (1) areas in which they primarily sought information from Washington and (2) other areas in which they sought information and insights mainly from their peers in other states.

Technical Assistance Needs Appropriately Addressed at the Federal Level

Help with Development of Skill Standards. State-level school-to-work system developers consistently report technical assistance needs involving the development and application of skill standards, as follows:

- Help in identifying career clusters around which standards might be developed
- Assistance in integrating state-developed skill standards with standards being developed by national groups
- Help in coordinating and integrating standards for academic performance and skill standards
- Opportunities to obtain information copies of draft standards prepared by national groups and other states

State respondents cited the first of these standards-related needs—for the identification of career clusters—as the highest priority among the four areas. Although most of the states have identified their own preliminary array of career clusters, some state officials are reluctant to invest the resources that would be needed to develop meaningful standards for specific career areas in each cluster. They fear that, if some other set of clusters were adopted at the national level, it would supersede their own clusters, thus making their standards-development work up to that point virtually useless. Indeed, our own inspection of the states' frameworks confirms the distinct differences across states, as reviewed in Chapter 4.

Despite the states' concerns in this regard, however, our analysis suggests that state-led standards development in support of any career areas important in a given state could be used by the state, no matter what broad state or national frameworks were to be adopted. Even so, state leaders see the uncertainty around this issue as creating a serious barrier to any major state effort to develop skill standards.

The second need—for help integrating state standards with nationally developed standards—represents another angle on the same general problem. States (such as Maine) that have devoted their own resources to developing standards in one or more career areas understandably want their standards to conform to standards developed nationally, to ensure the portability of workers' credentials and to satisfy state leaders' overall desire to stay within the national mainstream on important areas of education and training policy and practice. The states clearly want their state-developed standards to be consistent with national models. On the other hand, if the standards do not conform to national models, states want to know whether a good reason exists for any differences, such as that the particular demands of an industry within the state (e.g., shipbuilding) dictate stan-

dards in a career area (e.g., metalworking) that differ from the typical demands imposed by that industry nationally.

The third need—for help coordinating and integrating academic standards with skill standards—reflects a general frustration with the demands of national and state-level reform activities. State leaders, especially those in state education agencies, are concerned that the different requirements associated with the development of academic standards and skill standards could lead to parallel sets of standards that address many of the same types of student learning but that reflect no awareness of one another.

The fourth need—for information about what national groups and other states are doing in the development of skill standards—is widely felt across all the states. Respondents say that they occasionally come across information indicating that their peers elsewhere are struggling with the same problems that concern them, and that understanding the steps their peers have taken and seeing the products they have developed could help prevent unnecessary effort. However, what is not clear is whether these state personnel would be willing to share their own draft standards and other products with outsiders during their early stages of development. We believe this hesitation to be an obstacle in the sharing of draft materials, no matter how much the states may want to see them.

Help in Integrating Plans for School-to-Work Transition Systems with Related Plans and Programs. In most of the eight states, the teams responsible for developing and implementing school-to-work transition plans acknowledged that they have had relatively little contact with others working within their state on ostensibly related plans, especially the state plan required under Goals 2000. Given the emphasis in both plans on achieving systemic reform in education, this lack of contact is surprising and unfortunate. State leaders said that, in particular, they would like help identifying the parts of each plan that are most appropriate as points of interface among the plans for school-to-work transition, Goals 2000, the 1994 Improving America's Schools Act, and other areas.

Help in Outreach to Employers and Other Stakeholders. Although some states are developing approaches and materials for marketing their school-to-work transition systems to parents, educators, and employers (as discussed in Chapter 2), several states said that they would appreciate federal-level help in deciding how to target these approaches and materials and what appeals are likely to be most effective within their state. In a more direct request, Iowa asked for the federal government to develop slick brochures and video materials that the state could use to explain STWOA policy to a broad audience of stakeholders. In a related request, West Virginia asked for help in targeting an appeal to employers that would emphasize the benefits that a functioning school-to-work transition system would generate for the business sector.

Technical Assistance Needs Appropriately Addressed Through Interactions Among Peers

In discussing technical-assistance needs with our state respondents, we found that many of them emphasized the value of discussions and interactions with their peers in other states. They saw this as a valuable assistance strategy both for state officials and for local administrators and practitioners. Respondents in Oregon, for example, said that they would like to be able to meet with peers from other states that were at similar stages of school-to-work system development; these respondents said that they believed the resulting conversations should focus in particular on the problems each of the states had faced, how they had addressed them, and what the effects of these efforts had been. Respondents in West Virginia said that they were particularly interested in hearing about other states' successes and how they had been achieved, including what approaches had been tried and rejected before finding a successful strategy. In this regard, several state-level respondents expressed an interest in learning more about Maine's establishment of a 501(c)(3) organization to administer its youth apprenticeship activities; respondents also showed an interest in Oregon's planned development and use of CIM and CAM, as well as that state's school-to-work legislation. Respondents also said that they would like the opportunity to visit local sites that are successfully implementing a state school-to-work transition strategy.

One respondent suggested that the federal school-to-work team develop a list of state and local personnel who are experts in various areas of school-to-work system development and implementation. If such a list were available, this respondent said that personnel in his state would conduct telephone interviews with the people identified as having expertise in a field in which his state needed help, select one (or more) experts, and then arrange to bring the selected individual(s) to the state to provide consultation and assistance. He said that program personnel in his state would learn more from administrators and other practitioners who had actually designed and operated successful school-to-work transition initiatives than they would from consultants.

Areas for Further Development and Communication of Federal Policy

Our analysis confirms the value of further development and public communication of federal policies regarding school-to-work transition. Based on our review of state plans, as supplemented by our interviews and observations, however, we found that provisions in various federal authorities undercut the strong emphasis in STWOA on integrating school-to-work transition activities into a comprehensive statewide system. Although these provisions do not directly contradict STWOA in most instances, by their existence they perpetuate the notion of segmented, categorical responses to young people's needs to make successful transitions from schooling to high-skill, high-wage careers. The federal government could strengthen the state and local implementation of STWOA by articulating what a comprehensive school-to-work transition system might look like, taking steps to (1) streamline and increase integration across the various authorities that bear on school-to-work transition and (2) forcefully communicate its core policy to everyone involved, including employers, educators, organized labor, political leaders, parents, and students.

Streamlining and Integration Across Authorities

The first step in achieving this objective is for the federal government (if it has not already done so) to distill and articulate the core policies and strategies embodied in STWOA. With these principles firmly in mind, it could identify a series of models that would demonstrate how the many current categorical programs (e.g., Perkins Act, JTPA, Goals 2000, Improving America's Schools Act Title I) could be brought together in support of a unified system facilitating school-to-work transition. With these models as an informal guide, the government could then systematically review every related federal program and policy to draft changes that would bring each into conformity with the principles of STWOA. Although the present study did not explore these related programs and policies in depth, we took note of areas in which respondents cited inconsistencies with STWOA's emphasis on development of a comprehensive school-to-work transition system. These areas include the following:

- *Multiple planning requirements*

  Respondents in several states said that the differing state planning requirements (including timelines) across federal programs have the effect of discouraging state-level integration or even coordination across similar types of activities. They cited, in particular, the state planning requirements for Goals 2000, the Perkins Act, and the JTPA 8 percent State Education Coordination activities.

- *Multiple requirements for fiscal and programmatic accountability*

  A similar problem was cited in connection with provisions across these same authorities for fiscal and programmatic accountability. Respondents said that requirements to keep funds under these authorities separate prevented them from undertaking certain types of streamlining that might otherwise help them achieve greater program integration, as well as cost savings.

- *Outdated child labor laws*

  Several respondents said that certain occupational areas covered under federal child labor laws no longer present hazards to young workers because of technological and other changes. They said that, by conducting an in-depth review and updating these federal laws, the federal government would prompt the

states to conduct the same type of review of their own laws, which are often even more restrictive. Updating these federal and state laws would provide two benefits to school-to-work transition efforts, according to respondents—(1) making more high-skill, high-wage occupational areas available for work-based learning and (2) drawing appropriate attention to those occupational areas that are truly hazardous and hence inappropriate for young workers.

- *Restrictions on unpaid work under the Fair Labor Standards Act*

  One state reported on barriers to work-based learning created by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Potential private-sector sponsors of work-based learning slots are concerned that they will run afoul of the Act if they provide unpaid learning opportunities that also yield a productivity gain for the employer.

The streamlining of federal policies and strategies in the preceding areas would facilitate a much more consistent and focused federal message regarding school-to-work transition than has been possible up to now.

Communication of Core Message

With a more coherent and streamlined set of policies and strategies in support of school-to-work transition, the federal government would be able to provide more persuasive leadership in this field than it is currently equipped to deliver. It could bring national, state, and local leaders from all sectors together to convey its message that an integrated educational program of school-based and work-based learning can produce a well-educated and well-trained cadre of high-skill, high-wage workers for the 21st century. This message would include at least three essential parts, as follows:

- Success in this endeavor must be a shared responsibility involving employers, educators, organized labor, political leaders, parents, and students.
- A central component of this collective responsibility is partnership in the establishment of high academic and career skills standards for all American youth.
- Because of its traditions and capacities for leadership in education and work-force development, state governments, in consultation with other stakeholders, can lead the design and operations of school-to-work transition systems capable of serving all American youth.

Through enactment of STWOA, the President and Congress have empowered state government to carry out their leadership role. By modifying related legislation and administrative policy and practice to make them supportive of STWOA's goals and operational provisions, the federal government will significantly strengthen the states' capacity to fulfill their important new responsibility.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

BAT	Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, U.S. Department of Labor
CAM	Certificate of Advanced Mastery (Oregon)
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers
CIM	Certificate of Initial Mastery (Oregon)
DOL	U.S. Department of Labor
IRC	Industrial Resource Center (Pennsylvania)
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
PSA	Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
REAL	Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (West Virginia and Michigan)
RFP	Request for Proposal
STWOA	School-to-Work Opportunities Act
SWAT	School-to-Work Action Team
V-TECS	Vocational-Technical Consortium of the States